Heaven Upon Earth:

OR, THE

Best Friend

IN THE

Worst of Times.

Delivered in several

SERMONS,

By *James Janeway*, Minister of the Gospel.

The Sixth Edition much Corrected.

JOHN 15. *ver.* 15.
Henceforth I call you no more Servants,——
but Friends.

LONDON,
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THE EPISTLE TO THE READER.

When I consider what a noble thing the Soul of Man is, the High end for which he was Made, and the great Account he is shortly to make to Him that made him, I cannot but wonder, That he who was made little lower than the Angels, should make himself little better than the Beasts.

The great, and dreadful God hath taken much pains to reduce the Inhabitants of London, *and indeed all the Nation to the Obedience of his Son. He hath been pleading with poor* England *of late in such a manner, as is scarce to be paralleld in*

fore-going Ages; he hath left the print of his Fingers behind him, and written divine displeasure in Black Letters.

The Righteous Judge began his Circuit in London, and in that one City, above one Hundred Thousand received the Sentence of Death from his Just Tribunal.

That was not quite Remov'd before another Amazing Judgment was sent to succeed it. The Voyce of the Lord was not heard, the Language of the Plague was not understood; wherefore the dreadful Jehovah spake Louder, and Louder, as he did once from Mount Sinai, in Fire, Flame, and Smoak, he rode upon the Wings of the Wind, he rode in a Chariot of Flaming Fire, whilst the Bells did Ring their own Knells, as they were tumbling; and it's to be feared, were more melted at the Anger of the Mighty God, than Thousands of Hard-hearted Men and Women were. The Leads of the Churches were Dissolved into showers more easily far than stupid professors, that were wont to sit under them. That was a Black Cloud indeed which no Wind could blow over, till it fell in such Scalding Drops.

These

These Considered, I hope it will not be unwelcome, nor unseasonable, if I put you upon looking out for such a Friend as will provide sufficiently for his under all these Straits, and prove the Best in the Worst of Times, *He knows* Job *upon the Dunghil, as well as* David *upon the Throne; he will be most Kind when others are most Unkind; he will Visit you, when others will scarce Look upon you. In his house you shall be as welcome as ever. There are many Mansions, if it were not so, he would have told you. In this City there is Room enough, and you shall have Entertainment, &c. be more welcome than if you had stayed away: His Doors will be open to them who have no Houses to hide their Heads in. Come to him ye Harbourless ones, he Invites you Earnestly and Heartily, &c. He will give you Shelter, you that have no Friends, or but sorry ones. Come to him now in your Straits, and he will never cast your poverty, or his Kindness in your Teeth, except your Carriage be Proud, and unbecoming your State. God hath lately read us a Lecture of the Vanity of all Creature-Enjoyments, And will you after this*

refuse Acquaintance with Him, who will be better to you than a thousand of the best Friends that ever man had upon Earth?

I have in the following Book given you Directions how you may come to be Acquainted with him.

As God appointed Cities of Refuge, so he gave express Command, that the way to them should be made Plain, Fit, and Broad: And therefore the Messengers work every Year was to Remove all Stumbling-Blocks, and Offences. They suffered not any Hill or Dale to be in the way; and at the partition of weyes, they set up in writing, Refuge, Refuge, *That the* Pursued *might have notice what way to take to upon every turn,* Deut. 19. 2, 3.

The like I have endeavoured in this ensuing Discourse, to make the Way to this Blessed Friend, Plain and Familiar. Pray for a Blessing upon it, which cost the Author some Pains, Prayers, Tears, and Groans; That what was here written, might be the Transcript of his own Experience, and might be some way subservient to the Glory of God in the Conversion and Comfort of Souls. If you find any good in the use of this Book,

give

give God the Praiſe, and labour to keep a conſtant warm ſence of the Excellency of ſuch a Friend upon your Spirits, and commend this Friend to all your Relations, and Acquaintance; that none of them after great Loſſes, may loſe God, Heaven, and themſelves too. O that will be a Dreadful Loſs indeed! I again beſeech you; forget not to Pray for one of the moſt unworthy inſtruments that ever Infinite Goodneſs made uſe of in ſo glorious a Work:

James Janeway.

July 20.
1669.

Books printed for, and sold by *Dorman Newman*, at the *Kings Arms* in the *Poultrey*.

THE works of Mr. James Janeway, containing these six following Treatises, Heaven on Earth, or the best friend in the worst of times: Death unstung, being a Sermon preached at the Funeral of Mr. Thomas Moseley an Apothecary, with A Narrative of his Life and Death; also the manner of Gods dealing with him before and after his Conversion.

A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of Thomas Savage.

Invisible Realities, demonstrated in the holy Life and Triumphant Death of Mr. John Janeway.

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Heaven realized, being some of the Experiences of a famous Christian Gentlewoman.

HEAVEN

HEAVEN UPON EARTH.

Job 22. 21.

Acquaint now thy self with him, and be at peace, thereby good shall come unto thee.

THey who have improved their experience of things by Wisdom, and gathered up the value of mans life, by comparing his desire with his Enjoyments, his Troubles and Sorrows with his Content and Joy, have concluded the worth of the life of man to be below nothing; they have drawn a black line upon the whole, and shut up all in darkness. Thus *Jacob* of old in the account which he gives of his life to *Pharaoh*, Gen. 47. 9. & *Job* 5. 7. and also *Solomon*, who had an extraordinary measure of wisdom

dom by Divine diſpenſation, who had a large ſpirit like the Sand of the Sea-ſhore, he gave himſelf great liberty in trying what that *good under the Sun* for the ſons of men was, *Eccleſ.* 2, 1. When he had taken a taſte of all the worlds Contents, yet he finds a bitterneſs mixed in all delights, which abideth no longer than the pleaſure *verſ.* 11, &17. And whoſoever ſhall enter into himſelf, and feel the workings of his own mind, ſhall be able to read over the Tranſcript of the ſame in his own Conſcience. Who is he among the ſons of men, that in his Natural life hath attained to a ſtate wherein he was able to ſay, *Here I will ſtay, it is now well with me, I deſire no addition to my preſent condition?* If there be any ſuch, I dare undertake to prove him unacquainted with himſelf. Where now ſhall I faſten the blame of this univerſal evil? Shall we fall out with our life, as a thing not worth the having? Shall we ſhrink unto our former nothing, and caſt up our being and life into the hands of God, as that out of which we gathered nothing but bitterneſs and diſquiet? Far be this from us, this were to juſtifie that evil and wicked ſervant, who ſaid of God, *That he knew he was a hard Maſter, reaping where he had not ſown, and gathering where he had not ſtrawed.* This would be to accuſe God of having made us to an unavoidable neceſſity of miſery. How then comes it to paſs, that we are all held faſt in this common calamity? It is from thy ſelf, O man, it is from thy ſelf, this evil is becauſe of our falling from God. It is a Righteous thing with God, that when man departed from him, he ſhould reap the Fruit of his own doings; and indeed it is impoſſible for a creature of our compo-

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ſure and conſtitution, but to feel it ſelf diſſatisfied with all worldly material employments, and to find trouble and diſquiet in it ſelf, while it is deprived of its true good. If we would have a true account of our diſquiet and diſſatisfaction, this it is. God made man of all the works of his hands, to be the neareſt to himſelf, and hath fitted his principles for a higher life, then that which hath the things of this world for its object; but man hath made himſelf like the Beaſts that periſh. We have given our ſouls into captivity to our bodies, or rather, we are fallen from our Union with God, and are gathered up into our ſelves, and become deprived of a ſufficiency in ſeparation from God; then it muſt needs be, that we being gone down into a lower ſtate than that which we were made to, ſhould find nothing but diſſatisfaction and emptineſs: here we are by nature, and hitherto we have brought our ſelves by forſaking God.

Now the great inquiry will be, what Remedy there is for this our woful condition; is there any way whereby we may be delivered from this miſery? If there be, what way is it? Theſe words which I have choſen to ſpeak to, do contain the Anſwer to this Inquiry.

Acquaint now thy ſelf with him, and be at peace, thereby good ſhall come unto thee. This is the counſel of one of *Job's* three friends to him in the time of his great affliction. You have heard of the affliction of *Job*, and how his three friends came to relieve him with their Counſel; but the Devil who had a Commiſſion from God to try his utmoſt with *Job*, yet ſparing his life, made uſe of his friends, who are to be a comfort in the hour

of adversity, to be a great means of his disquiet, so that he cries out of them, *Miserable comforters are ye all*, Chap. 16. 2. And the great way of their troubling him was, by misapplying, by making false application of true principles. In their Discourses there are many excellent Truths; yet by their hard construing, and ungrounded condemning of him, they by God are reproved, as not having spoken the thing that was right, *Chap.* 42. 7. yet in many things their counsel was suitable, and seasonable, of which sort, the words in the Text may be accounted. In this Chapter *Eliphaz* had been inquiring into the cause of *Job's* great affliction, and holding this for an undeniable Principle, that the righteous God, being the great disposer of affliction, did bring this evil upon him because of his sin; he measured the greatness of his sins, by the greatness of afflictions; he made account, because Gods hand was gone forth in an extraordinary manner against *Job*, therefore there was some extraordinary guilt upon him, *vers.* 5. & 13. *And thou sayest, How doth God judge through the dark clouds?* Thus we have his apprehension of *Job*, as one under great affliction, because of his great sins; and the Text is *Eliphaz* his counsel to *Job*, under this character; and so is suitable advice to those that are under sickness, or great afflictions, and that are under the guilt of great sin.

Acquaint thy self with him, and be at peace, thereby good shall come unto thee. The words are a Doctrine for the soul under a sense of its lost condition, with a Promise very comfortable upon the embracing thereof.

The Doctrine is, *Acquaint thy self with him, and be at peace.* The

The Promiſe: *Thereby good ſhall come unto thee.*

Theſe words, *Be at peace*, may be referred either to the former, as an addition to the Doctrine, *Be at peace*; that is, keep your ſelves in a quiet ſubmiſſion to the hand of God; or to the latter, and ſo *be at peace*, is as much as, *peace ſhall be to thee.*

In the Doctrine we are to conſider the *Act*, and *Object.*

The Act, *Acquaint.*

The Object is *God.*

DOCTRINE.

So that the *Doctrine* is, *To enter into acquaintance with God.* This Propoſition ſtands forth to the view of every eye, that it is the Duty of man to be *acquainted with God.*

Now the firſt thing that is before us to enquire after, is, What this *acquaintance with God is.*

Secondly, to evidence and clear it to be the Duty of man to *acquaint himſelf with God.* Acquaintance with God implyes ſeveral things.

1. It ſignifies a full and determinate knowledge of this Truth, that there is a *God*, and ſo to know him, as to his Nature diſtinct from all other *beings.*

There is a three-fold knowledge of God.

1. *A Rational.*
2. *A Natural.*
3. *A Supernatural.*

Firſt, there is a *Rational knowledge of God*, which is a clear diſcovery of an Almighty, All-ſufficient Cauſe of all things, which is attained by a Reaſonable diſcuſſing Power of the ſoul, which argueth from things that are viſible and ſenſible

to an invisible and and self-principled Cause of all things. Man found himself brought into the world furnished with an innumerable variety of Creatures, and none of these having power to make it self; we see likewise such an accurate order in every particular Creature; and in all the Creatures one with another, that we cannot but see clearly that there is a Supream Almighty Cause of all things, who hath by his power, brought forth all thing into being: who is likewise the most wise Agent, who by his unsearchable wisdom, hath curiously framed every Creature, and by his wonderful Counsel hath set them in such an order, that they all serve one annother, till at length they all meet in man, as in the common center.

Secondly, there is a *Natural knowledg* of God, which is the inward touch, and mental sensation of a Supream Righteous Judge, to whose trial we feel our selves under an unavoidable bond, in doing *good* and *evil*. This is that which is commonly called *Conscience*: this a man finds in himself if at any time he have committed any secret sin whatsoever, which none in the world knows but himself: he feels it to be a pressure upon his spirit, as being under the examination of a power superior to himself. Now this is nothing else but a secret impression that God hath made of himself upon the minds of Men, by which man is bound to stand before the Tribunal of God. These two ways of knowing of God were very clear to man in his perfect state, but since the fall of man they are much weakened, and decayed. But,

Thirdly, There is a *supernatural* way whereby

by vve come to knovv God vvhich hath repaired our loſs by *Adams* ſin, and that is by Gods extraordinary Revelation of himſelf in his holy Scriptures: by theſe vve may come to have a more clear diſtinct knowledge of God, both that he is, and vvhat he is. To theſe three vvays of letting in the knowledge of God into the ſoul, three mental Acts of the ſoul do anſwer.

Firſt, A Rational Diſcourſe, by vvhich vve find out God by the Creatures.

Secondly, An inward ſenſation, which feels God as juſt in good and evil.

The Third mental Act is Faith vvhich for its Foundation hath the Word of God.

There is a Fourth vvay of knowing God vvhich is by experiment; vvhich is vvhen God manifeſts himſelf to his peculiar ones, and lets out the knowledge of himſelf to their Souls; as vvhen the Sun breaks forth vvith a bright ſhining in a cloudy day: but this belongeth rather to another head.

Thus you ſee the firſt thing imployed in this *acquaintance with God*, vvhich is the loweſt.

Yet hovv many are there that have little *acquaintance with God* in theſe ſigns? May vve not come to many vvho profeſs they knovv God, and yet among all their thoughts, they have had fevv or none to ſatisfie themſelves concerning him? Hovv groſs are the apprehenſions of ſome concerning God? Some men reſiſt and ſtifle that *Natural knowledge* that they have of God, ſuch as thoſe, *Rom.* 1. 20. they did not like to retain God in their knowledge. and God gave them over to a Reprobate mind, or a mind void of judgment, as the vvord ſignifies. Others have lived all their

days upon the bounty and goodneſs of God, and yet have not been led by the ſtreams to the Fountain, from which all hath flow'd. Others can buſie themſelves all their time in other things, and little inquire into the word of God, by which they may be led to the knowledge of him; *But woe to thoſe on whom the fury of the Lord ſhall be poured out, becauſe they know not God,* Jer, 10. 23.

Secondly, *Acquaintance with God,* imployes frequent acceſs unto God. We do not uſually reckon our ſelves acquainted with any perſon, by a bare knowledge that ſuch a perſon there is, and that we are able to give ſome General Deſcription of him; but when we ſay we are acquainted with any, it is underſtood that we have been in ſuch a ones company, we have come to him, and been with him: ſuch is our acquaintance to be with God.

Under this Head I ſhall ſpeak, Firſt, *Of that ſeparation that is of the ſoul from God.*

Secondly, *Of the return of the ſoul to God.*

Thirdly, *Of the abiding of the ſoul with God.*

Firſt, Of the *ſeparation and diſtance of the ſoul from God.* That corrupted eſtate in which every man comes into the world, is a ſtate of ſeparation from God. This diſtance is not to be underſtood as a Phyſical Natural Diſtance, for ſo God is near to every one of us by his Omnipreſence, & by his infinite Power, ſuſtaining us in our being and actions. *Acts.* 17. 27, 28. *Though he be not far from every one of us; for in him we live, move, and have our being.* But this is to be underſtood,

Firſt, *Of a moral ſeparation from God.* There is a great ſtrangeneſs between our ſouls and God: we reckon our ſelves to have little to do with him,

him, and to be very remotely concern'd in him, we reckon that God takes very little regard of us, we look upon God as far from us, and we think God looks upon us as at a great distance; we love not God, and think that God loves not us.

Secondly, this *separation* may be understood of a *Judicial Distance*, at which God hath set sinful man from himself. Man is kept out from God, as being unfit to approach to him in his sinfulness and impurities, and that is either in this life, in which condition every one is, *till he be made nigh by Christ, and set before the Father without sin in him: till they are born again of the Spirit, & justified, and sanctified by Christ*, Ephes. 2. 13. *Ye that sometimes were afar off, where made near by the blood of Christ*. Here this judicial separation is the execution of that terrible sentence, *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels*, Mat. 25. 41. Thus ye see the Distance at which man is from God, which is not Physical, but either Moral or Judicial.

Secondly, When we are thus separated from God, if we will be *acquainted* with him, there is required a returning to God. *Acquaintance* doth necessarily imply an Union: Now where there was a former *separation* and *distance*, there is required a motion to compliance, and a return either in both parties, or in one at least: so that before ever we can be *acquainted with God*, there must be a forsaking our former distance, the separation must be be removed. Now God hath done what could be conceived, and beyond what could be expected towards the reducing of us, to an union with himself; whereas he might justly have thrust us away from him for ever, and never have

have given us liberty to come near him more, as being so filthy by sin, that his Holiness cannot endure us: yet he hath freely set open a door of hope for our return: he did not come thus nigh to Angels vvhen they fell, but they vvere turned avvay from him, and are bound in chains of darkness to the Judgment of the great day: it is impossible for them to return any more. And so it vvould have been for us, had not God made it possible by an act of Free Love; and he hath likewise revealed his vvillingness to receive us if vve return, yea, his earnest desire, *Turn ye, why will ye die?* Yea, his rejoycing in our return, as a Father rejoyceth to receive a prodigal Son that hath departed from him. But that God should go further, to close vvith us vvhile vve retain our impurities, and remain at a distance from him, it is impossible, because of the unchangeableness and simplicity of his Nature, and because of the purity and exactness of his Holiness; it must therefore necessarily followv, that a yielding and return must be on our parts, or else there is no possibility of compliance betvveen God and us, after that vve have forsaken him by sin. And this is most righteous and equal; for man did forsake God, God did not forsake man; man made the difference; man ran avvay from God: God followvs man as far as his Holiness and Unchangable Nature vvill permit him; he calls to us to return, he is ready to meet and imbrace us in the arms of his Love, and to receive us into acquaintance vvith himself, as the Father in the Parable met his prodigal Son, Luke 15, 20. *He saw him afar off, & had compassion on him, ran and fell upon his neck and kissed him.* Herein have vve

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ſhadowed out to us the great readineſs of God to receive returning ſinful man: but as the Prodigal Son muſt return to his Father, ſo man muſt return to God. Now it is ſin that ſeparates between us and God, and keeps good things from us, *Iſa.* 59. 2. *Your iniquity hath ſeparated between you and your God, and your ſins have hid his face from you:* Therefore while we cleave to our ſins, vve are ſeparated from God: till vve are ſeparated from our ſins, vve cannot be united to God. That ye ſee our ſeparation from God, and our neceſſity of returning to God, before there can be any acquaintance vvith him.

Thirdly, *To our acquaintance with God,* is required an abiding vvith God We reckon not our ſelves acquainted vvith any perſon upon the firſt meeting, or when there hath paſſed but a vvord or two between us; but it is ſuppoſed to acquaintance, that vve have made a conſiderable ſtay vvith him; and have had frequent acceſs to him. Thus it is between God and us: vve muſt not only come to him, but abide vvith him, or elſe vve ſhall never be acquainted vvith him, *Joh.* 8. 23. *If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my Diſciples.* So I ſay, if you return to God, and continue vvith God, then ſhall ye be acquainted vvith him indeed. *Acquaintance,* ſignifies not a bare Act, but a State or Habit. Now this is the difference between an Act and a State; that an Act is paſſing and is gone; but a State ſignifies an abiding and continuance. There may be a drawing nigh to God, without abiding and continuing vvith God, upon ſome deep Conviction, or ſtrange providence, or eminent danger; as it is ſaid, *In their affection, they will ſeek me early,*

Yet

Yet they may ſoon forget and forſake God. This is but a ſeeming and practical approaching to God, a drawing nigh in appearance, when the heart is far from God: but that approaching to God which makes acquaintance with God, is abiding with him. Thoſe that are acquainted with a ſpiritual life know theſe things what they are, and that they are the greateſt realities in the world; they know that ſometimes there is a greater nearneſs of their ſouls to God, they are ſenſible of the approaches of their heart to God; and of the withdrawing of their ſouls from God; they know what it is for the ſoul to feel the approaches of God, and his ſmiles fill their ſouls with unſpeakable Comfort: And to feel God withdrawing from the ſoul, this clouds their joy, and makes them go mourning: They can tell you at ſuch a time they were brought unto his Banquetting houſe, and his Banner over them was Love: They can tell you at ſuch time Chriſt came into his Garden to eat his pleaſant Fruits: at ſuch a time they heard the voice of their Beloved, ſaying, *Open to me, my Siſter, my Spouſe, my Love, my Dove, my Undefiled.* And when the ſoul hath neglected this knock of Chriſt to open to him, that then he hath withdrawn: *I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawn himſelf and was gone.* Theſe things are the experiences of a precious child of God, which I fear are little felt, and little known amongſt us: but where theſe things are not, there is no *acquaintance with God.* For,

Firſt, *They do know him.*

Secondly, *They draw nigh to him, they have near acceſs to him.*

Thirdly

Thirdly, *They have intimate Converſe with him.* This is another thing required to acquaintance. We are not ſaid to be acquainted with any perſon, unleſs we have had intimate converſe with him. We may be next Neighbours, and yet have no Acquaintance, unleſs our converſation hath been mutual. So, it is between God and us; there may be a nighneſs between the ſoul and God, and yet no Acquaintance between the ſoul and God. We are nigh to God, in our dependance upon him, we are near to God by his immediate providence and ſuſtentation of us, and by his Omnipotence. There is a nearneſs to God by way of Dedication. As God ſet apart the Children of *Iſrael* to be a people near unto himſelf, ſo the viſible Church of God is nearer to him then thoſe that are not of the Church. There is a nearneſs of Dedication among us by Baptiſm. But all this may be without Acquaintance. There is therefore required to our Acquaintance with God, an intimate converſe with God. We have great converſe with thoſe who are of the Family, or ſociety with us, Now ſuch is our acquaintance with God, as thoſe who are of his Family. God is called the Father of the Families of all the earth: and the viſible Church is reckoned as Gods Family; but in a great Family there may be little Acquaintance with thoſe perſons which be of remote employments: but to acquaintance with God there muſt be ſuch a relation as implies familiar converſe. This intimacy that the people of God have to him, is expreſſed by the neareſt relations in Scripture. As *Abraham* is called *The Friend of God*, 2 Chron. 20. 7. *Jehoſhaphat* prayes unto God, and

faith,

faith, *Art not thou our God, who didſt drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Iſrael, and gave it to the ſeed of* Abraham *thy friend for ever? And the Lord ſpake unto Moſes face to face, as a man ſpeaketh to his Friend,* Exod. 33. 11. John 15. 15. *Hence forth I call you not ſervants, but friends, for the ſervant knows not what his Lord doth; but I have called you Friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.* Now by *Friend* is commonly underſtood a ſtate of converſe and ſociety one with another. And this intimacy is expreſſed likewiſe by the relation of Husband and Wife, *Iſa.* 54. 5. *For thy Maker is thy Husband,* Hoſ. 2. 7. *Then ſhall ſhe ſay, I will go and return to my Husband, for then was it better with me than now.* By *husband* there is meant *God.* And the whole Book of the *Canticles* is a relation of the mutual converſe betwixt God & his people, betwixt Chriſt and his Church, under the relation of a *Bridegroom* and his *Spouſe.* Now what converſe more intimate than between Husband and Wife? Such is that between a ſoul acquainted with God, and God, Again, this is ſhadowed out to us under the relation of a Father and his Children, 1 John 3. 1. *Behold, what manner of Love the father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called his ſons!* And the holy Spirit is given to be the Spirit of Adoption in the hearts of Gods people, *Rom.* 8. 15, 16. *Ye have received the ſpirit of Adoption, whereby ye cry, Abba, Father. The ſpirit it ſelf beareth witneſs with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God.* What is ſignifi'd by this *Relation,* but a nigh Union and intimate converſe between the ſoul and God? And this is neceſſary to our acquaintance with God, even intimate converſe

with

with God. By this I mean a nearneſs of employment, when the Objects of our employments are the ſame, then are we ſaid to converſe with God, when we are employed about thoſe things wherein God is moſt. When there is, as it were, a mutual commerce and trading between the ſoul and God; man giving himſelf up to God, and God-giving himſelf out to man; man taking up the intereſt of God, and God undertaking for the intereſt of man; theſe & ſuch like actings are the converſe which the ſoul hath with God. I ſpeak of things which the men of the world are not acquainted with; but thoſe that are acquainted with God, know theſe things, and upon the mention of them, their hearts leap within them. As face anſwereth to face in a glaſs, ſo experience anſwereth theſe things. When this ſtring is ſtruck, their hearts do harmonize; as when a Lute-ſtring is ſtruck, the other ſtrings of higheſt concord with it move alſo. But theſe things are a myſtery to the world, and they ſay as thoſe of Chriſts word, *We know not what he ſaith.* And it is no wonder, for they are the actings of a Divine life, to which all are naturally dead, till they are raiſed to newneſs of life by th' quickning of the ſpirit of God. But I proceed to ſhew what is meant by this acquaintance with God.

Fourthly, To this Acquaintance with God, there is required a mutual Communication. Where there is acquaintance between man and man, there hath been a mutual Interchange of conference and diſcourſes. Thus when the ſoul is acquainted with God, there is an Interchange of conference between God and the ſoul. The ſoul openeth its wants, breaths out its complaint

plaints ſpreadeth its neceſſities before God; God openeth the treaſures of his love in his Son, the rich Mynes of his precious Promiſes, and the ſecrets of his good Will to the ſoul. Thus *Pſal.* 25. 15. *The ſecrets of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will ſhew them his Covenant.* Gen. 18. 17. *The Lord ſaith, ſhall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do?* Thoſe that are friends and acquaintance, they will let out their thoughts and purpoſes one to another, and they gave out themſelves mutually into communion one with another. Thus Chriſt knocks at the door of the ſoul, *Rev.* 3. 20. *Behold, I ſtand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and ſup with him, and he with me.* Here is Chriſt offering himſelf to the ſoul, and the ſoul is to entertain him: at another time the ſoul goes to God, and God entertains it; God hath promiſed that he will open, *Mat.* 7. 28. *Knock and it ſhall be opened unto you*; and to him that knocks it ſhall be opened. There are frequent actions among thoſe that are acquainted: And by theſe are expreſſed to us the acquaintance of the ſoul with God.

Now the Communications that are between the ſoul and God, are exceeding tranſcending all communications that are between mens acquaintance. Men may communicate their thoughts, their eſtates, their aſſiſtance to one another; but they cannot communicate their life, nor their nature, nor their likeneſs; but ſuch communications there are between God and the ſoul that is acquainted with him. All *being* is a communication from God the firſt *being*: nay, the ſeveral degrees of *being*, have ſeveral communicati-

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ons from God, some greater and some lesser, spiritual beings have a higher communication then natural; but Gods highest communications have been to man in that mystical Union of the Divine Nature to the Humane Nature in Christ, and next in the mystical Union of the Sons of God to Christ, and in him to the Father. Thus Christ is said to live in us, *Colos.* 2. 20. *I live, saith Paul, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.* Thus Christ prays the Father for his Children, that thay may be one, *as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they be one in us,* Joh. 4. 17, 21. & Joh. 1. 15, 16. *Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God,* 2 Pet. 1. 4. *We are said to be partakers of the Divine Nature.* This expression implyes high communication of God to man. Again, there are high acts of communication from man to God (for though God receives not from man, yet man is to act as giving out himself to God;) such as to give up the will to Gods will. As that of *Eli. It is the Lord let him do what seemeth him good.* And that of *David,* 2 Sam. 15. 16. *If he thus say, I have no delight in thee, behold, here am I, let him do with me as seemeth good unto him.*

Another act of high Communication of a mans self to God, is parting with present enjoyments for furture hopes, in confidence of Gods promise. Thus the Spirit of God works in the children of God a readiness to forsake Father or Mother, and Brethren, and Sister, and life it self for the cause of God. Thus *John Baptist* was willing to become *Nothing,* that Christ might become *All,* to be cast *down,* that Christ might be lifted up, Joh. 3. 13. *He must increase, but I must decrease.*

Thus *Abraham* gives his *Isaack* to dye when God calls for him. Thus *Moses* esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of *Egypt*, Heb. 11. 26. *Paul* counted not his life dear for Christ, Acts 20. 24. These have been the actings of the souls of those that have been acquainted with God, and such workings as these are the feeling of a child of God.

I have shewed you four things which are requisite to acquaintance with God,

First, Knowledge of God.

Secondly, access to him.

Thirdly, Converse with him.

Fourthly, Communication to him, and from him.

Fifthly, There is likewise required to acquaintance, a loving compliance. Amongst men Acquaintance implyes Affection. And so it is between God and man. Never any soul was acquainted with God, that did not love God; and such a soul is an enemy to God; therefore very few are acquainted with God; but all that are not acquainted with God, are enemies to God. If we should come to a person that is not acquainted with God, and say, Thou art an enemy to God; this would seem a heavy imputation: but I speak it freely, thou, whosoever thou art, that art not acquainted with God, thou art an enemy to God; for thou art still as thou we're born: but we are all enemies to God according to our corrupt nature, and abide enemies till we come to be acquainted with God. Love to God, and acquaintance with God go together, are heightned by one another. First, God lets into the soul by his Spirit a partial discovery of himself, and

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By this with the working of his Spirit, he inclines the heart in love to him. Then on the first working of the soul towards God, he lets in a clear light, whereby he draweth the soul to a further degree of love. A clear place for this, *Ephes.* 3. 7, 18. *And that being rooted and grounded in love, ye may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the length, and breadth, and depth and height, and to know the love of God which passeth all understanding: that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.* The love of God fits the soul to comprehend the glorious discoveries of God; and the discoveries of God, doth heighten our love to God. Acquaintance with God, makes us like unto God as in *Job.* 3. 2. *We shall see him as he is.* And our likeness to God, as it makes us the delight of God, so it makes us delight in God; for the cause of Complacency and Love is a likeness between the Lover and Beloved. God doth not love us with a love of complacency, till we are like him, nor do we love God, till we are made like God. Now our beholding God, and being acquainted with him, is a great way to our being made like to God, 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. *We all with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* Thus you see that love is likewise required to our acquaintance with God, without it no acquaintance.

I have in the first part, spoken of the Nature of acquaintance with God in five particulars. There must be,

First, A Knowledge of God.

Secondly, Nigh access to God.

Thirdly, Familiar converse with God.

Fourthly, Mutual communication between us and God.

Fifthly, An affectionate love towards God.

The next thing should be to shew that man is to be acquainted with God; but we will first take a review of these things. We have taken these things into our understandings; now let us set our hearts to these things, for in these things is the life of Religion. If there be acquaintance with God, then gross wickedness drops off, as scales from an ulcerated body, when the constitution of the body is mended. In acquaintance with God will be your only true comfort in this life; and the perfection of it, is the very happiness of Heaven. Let us then behold, till our hearts earnestly desire, till our souls be drawn out after acquaintance with God. If God be to be known, to be approached unto, to be conversed with by me, will he communicate himself to me? and I my self to him. Oh that he would love me, that I might love him! Oh blessed are they that know him, as they are known of him! It is good for me to draw nigh to him. *A day in his Court is better than a thousand elsewhere. My soul longeth, ye fainteth for the Courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh cryeth out for the living God.* Oh that I were received into converse with God! that I might hear his voyce, and see his countenance, for his voyce is sweet, and his countenance comly! Oh that I might communicate my self to God, and that he would give himself to me! Oh that I might love him! that I were sick of Love! that I might die in love! that I migh lose my self in his Love, as a small drop in the unfathomtess depth of his Love! that I might dwell in

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the eternal love of him? This is *acquaintance with God.*

Acquaint now therefore thy self with God, and be at peace, so shall good come unto thee. We now proceed to the next thing, which is to evidence it to be the duty of man, to acquaint himself with God. This then is that into which the whole Scripture runs, as into a common Channel. The Scriptures are a discovery of Gods proceedings with man under a double Covenant, and this is the great design of God in both Covenants. The first Covenant was, *That while man did remain in obedience to God, God would give man free and intimate acquaintance with himself.* But if man became disobedient, then he should be dispossessed of an interest in God, and of Communion with him; which was that death threatned upon the *eating the forbidden Fruit.* The death of the body is its being separated from the Soul, but the death of the Soul, is in separation from God. Now immediately upon *Adams* transgression, man becomes unacquainted with God; so that upon the hearing of the voice of the Lord, *they hid themselves from the presence of the Lord, among the trees of the garden.* What a woful case is man naturally in? He hath lost his acquaintance with God, and was in a way, never, never to recover it: upon Gods approach he flees. And such is the nature of all sin, it puts a man into a disposition to greater sins: Every departure from God inclines towards a greater. In the first Covenant this is the whole of it; it is both a command to keep nigh to God, and a promise of Gods being nigh to them, and a threatning of Gods putting them away far from him, man breaking the first

Covenant. The immediate effect of it was the ſin of fleeing from God, quite contrary to that acquaintance. Inſtead of their former apprehenſions of God, they ſeem to have forgotten his omnipreſence: inſtead of peace with God, they have nothing but dread and torment in the thoughts of God; inſtead of drawing nigh to God, they run away from him; inſtead of converſe with God, they chooſe never to have to do with him more; inſtead of giving themſelves up to God, they if it had been poſſible, would have hid themſelves from God. Acquaintance with God is the ſum of the firſt Covenant; unacquaintance with God is the miſery of the breach of the Govenant. This is likewiſe the great deſign and purpoſe of God in the ſecond Covenant. The ſecond Covenant, is this: When God beheld man in a miſerable condition, by reaſon of the breach of the Firſt Covenant, in the unſearchable riches of his goodneſs, according to the eternal purpoſe of his good Will towards Man, he made an agreement with his Son to ſend him amongſt a generation of ſinful Men, that if he would undertake to bring them back into acquaintance with the Father; he was willing and ready to receive them again into acquaintance with him; the Son being the expreſs Image of his Fathers will, and perſon, hath the ſame good will to man with the Father, and is ready to cloſe with his Fathers propoſals; and ſo enters into a Covenant with the Father to ſatisfie Divine Juſtice, and to take away Sin, and to take away the middle wall of Separation, to recover a choſen generation, and to bring them back again to God. Thus he became the head of another Covenant

nant between God and man. And as the first Covenant was made with *Adam* for him and his seed; So the second Covenant is made with Jesus Christ for him and his seed. Because that the first Covenant was broken in *Adam*, therefore the second Covenant was put into surer hands; into the hands of the Son, *the second Adam*, the Lord from heaven. Now I say, that the great design and purpose of this second Covenant is in reference to mans acquaintance with God, is clear. This is held forth to us in that parable of the lost sheep, Luke 15 45. *When the shepheard had lost one sheep, he leaves the flock and seeks for that which was lost.* So when man was lost by sin, Jesus Christ leaves all, to recover and fetch home that which was lost, *Were all gon astray like lost sheep, as* David *saith of himself*, Psal. 119. *Christ is come to seek & to save that which was lost*, Luke 19. 10. and Ephes. 2. 13, 14. *But now in Christ Jesus they who sometimes were afar-off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ; for he is our peace, who hath made both one.* In verse the tenth, is a description of our state without Christ, *being aliens from the Common wealth of Israel, being strangers from the Covenant of promise, and having no hope, and without God in the world.* This is a description of our unacquaintance with God. But Christ makes up the breach, and that by a double Act.

First, by Covenant with the Father, to make man fit for communion with him.

Secondly, His giving man assurance that the Father will receive him upon his return.

This then is the great design in all those glorious accomplishments of Christ; for this he left his Fathers bosome, that he might bring us into

acquaintance with the Father; for this end did he who thought it no robbery to be equal with the Father, make himself of no reputation, and took upon him the *form of a Servant*, and was made in the *likeness of man*; and being found in fashion of a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, *even the death of the Cross*, that he might bring man into a re-union with God; for this end did Christ live a wearisome troublesome life among a company of Rebells and Enemies, as if a man should live among Toads and Serpents: So that he cryed out, as weary of any longer abiding with them, *Oh faithless generation! How long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?* For this did he make himself an *offering for sin*, that by taking away sin, he might bring men to God. This is the great purpose of Christ in all his offices. Ye have heard of the three Offices of the Mediator, that he is a *Priest*, a *Prophet* and a *King*. This is the end of the Priestly Office. The purpose of Christs offering up himself a Sacrifice, was by satisfying the justice of God, to make way for sinners return to God. This is the end of his prophetical Office, to lead men into knowledge and acquaintance with God. This is the end of his Kingly Office; that governing them, and ruling their hearts by his Spirit, he might effectually bring men to God, to acquaintance with him. Now then, since this is the great design of God in his great dispensation towards man, to keep men in acquaintance with himself, and to reduce him when he had lost it; doth it not concern us to do our part for the bringing to pass this great work? shall God lose his end in making us, and in setting man in the

world

world every way furnished for his service? and shall God lose his end in sending his Son to receive us, when we had forsaken him? Shall Christ leave his Fathers bosom to bring us home to the Father, and shall we refuse to return? Shall he pour out his soul, an offering for sin, that he might make way for our access to God, *That we who were far off, might be made nigh by the blood of Christ?* and shall we frustrate all by our refusing to go to him? shall Christ come and offer us his help and direction to come to the Father, and shall we abide still strangers? Shall the Kings Son come into our Cottages to invite us to dwell with is Father at Court, and shall we shut the door upon him, esteeming our Cottages better than his Pallace.

Secondly, It is the duty of man to acquaint himself with God, because therein is the improvement of his highest excellency. Every one acknowledgeth an excellency in man, above all the rest of this lower world: Now what is this excellency of man? Is it not that he is made in a capacity of knowing God, and enjoying God, and having Communion with God? This is the height of his glory, Jer. 9. 23, 24. *Thus saith the Lord, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor the rich man in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understands and knoweth me, that I am the Lord that exercise loving kindness, and righteousness in the earth, and judgment, for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.* Yee see here, wherein man is to glory, for which he may value himself as truly glorious. In his understanding and knowing of God, man standeth above the rest of the Creatures

tures, in that he is a rational intellectual Agent. This is part of the Image of God even knowledge, *Col.* 3. 15. *which is renewed in knowledge after the Image of him that created him.* The nigher any thing resembleth God, the greater is the excellency of that thing; now in this we resemble God more than any other Creature, in that we are knowing, understanding Agents; and the highest improvement of this excellency of man is in the knowledge of God, and acquaintance with God, *Prov.* 20. 27. *The spirit of a man is called the candle of the Lord*; that is, it is a light set up in the soul, to direct the soul to a discovery of God. This is the highest improvement of our greatest excellency, and this is the excellency of man above other Creatures: this is that whereby one man excels another. Who are those whose names are as precious ointment poured forth? who are those which have obtained a good report? Are not they those who were most acquainted with God; *Enoch* is said to walk with God; an expression which signifies intimate acquaintance with God; and therefore was *translated that he should not see death.* And *Noah*, whose family alone was preserved when God destroyed the old World by water, he was said to walk with God, *Gen.* 6. 9. Among all the sons of men he kept close to God; and God took care of him alone. *Abraham* who was the Father of the Faithful, he was called *the Friend of God. Moses* who was the Mediator of the old Covenant, he was said to *speak with God face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend.* I might make mention of many more, who were the excellent ones of the earth; because they did delight in God, and God delighted in them, *Mal.* 3. 16, 17.

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They that feared the Lord, spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkned and heard: and the book of remembrance was written for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name: And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in the day when I make up my Jewels. Ye see how God accounts of those that are of his acquaintance, that met together and spake of God, and that thought upon his name; he reckons them amongst his jewels his peculiar Treasure: Such honour have all those that are acquainted with God. Ye see then the excellency of man above all the rest of the other Creatures. Now if man fail in this which is his highest excellency, he will become the vilest of Creatures. Every thing if it fail in its chiefest end and purpose, and highest excellency, becomes base and of no account: *If salt lose its savour* (saith our Saviour) *it is good for nothing.* If man have lost his acquaintance with God, he is henceforth good for nothing. The mind of man is his eye, by which he is to behold God; now if this eye be blind, if the light be darkness, how great is that darkness! The *Jews* in *Ezek* 15. 1. are likened to a Vine, which, if it be barren, is good for no use: Shall wood be taken thereof for any work? It is fit for nothing but to burn. So it is in man; his great use and excellency is his acquaintance with God: now if he fails in this, he is good for nothing. Verily, man is a base, vile, worthless thing without acquaintance with God. None are less esteemed among men, than they that want wisdome to converse among men. None are less esteemed before God, than they that know him not, that have not acquaintance with him, to converse

verſe with him. Ye ſee wherein the excellency and worth of man conſiſteth, and that if there be a deformity, where ought to be our chiefeſt beauty, the whole is accounted as a deformed piece. It concerns us then to look that we keep our glory unſpotted, our excellency in its due value; that we do not degrade our ſelves below what God hath placed us in. If we are not acquainted with God, our ſouls ſerve us to little purpoſe: it is cauſing the Soul [the Prince,] to go on foot, and to ſerve the body, which ſhould be as a ſervant; it is to let the candle of the Lord burn out in waſte.

Thirdly, Another enforcement of this duty of Acquaintance with God, is this. If we refuſe acquaintance with God, it is a ſlighting the greateſt of all the mercies that God beſtowes. Favors are to be valued, either by their proper excellencies, or according to the good will of him that beſtowes them: both theſe wayes this is to be accounted the greateſt of mercies. In Gods giving us leave to be acquainted with him, he gives out himſelf to be known, to be loved, to be converſed with, to be enjoyed. What greater gift can God give than himſelf? God is the portion of his people, he is the greateſt portion, the ſureſt, the moſt ſuitable, and the only durable portion. Thus they that know him eſteem of him. *Pſal.* 73. 26. *My fleſh & my heart faileth, but God is the ſtrength of my heart, and portion for ever.* *Pſal.* 16. 5, 6. *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance: the lines are fallen to me in a pleaſant place, yea, I have a goodly heritage. Bleſſed are the people that are in ſuch a caſe, yea, bleſſed are the people whoſe God is the Lord.* No

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greater mercy can be beſtowed upon any people, family, or perſon, than this, for God to dwell among them. If we value this mercy according to the excellency and worth of that which is beſtowed, it is the greateſt; if we value it according to the good will of him that gives it, it will appear likewiſe to be the greateſt favour. The greatneſs of the good will of God in giving himſelf to be our acquaintance, is evident in the nature of the gift. A man may give his eſtate to them to whom his love is not very large; but he never gives himſelf but upon ſtrong affection. God gives abundantly to all the works of his hands, he cauſeth the Sun to ſhine upon the evil, and upon the good; and the rain to deſcend upon the juſt and the unjuſt: But it cannot be conceived, that he ſhould give himſelf to be a Portion, a Friend, Father, Husband, but in abundance of Love. Whoſoever therefore ſhall refuſe acquaintance with God, ſlighteth the greateſt favour that ever God did beſtow upon man. Now conſider what a high charge this is; to abuſe ſuch a kindneſs from God, is an act of the greateſt vileneſs. *David* was never ſo provoked, as when the King of *Ammon* abuſed his kindneſs in his Ambaſſadors, after his fathers death. And God is highly provoked when his greateſt mercies, beſtowed in the greateſt love, are rejected, and caſt away. What could God give more and better than himſelf? And how heavy will this imputation be! Theſe are thoſe that look upon God, as not worth being acquainted with. Let us therefore conſider how we ſhall be able to ſtand to theſe Accuſations. Shall we not be ſpeechleſs, when theſe things ſhall be charged

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upon us? Shall we not be confounded when we ſtand to the trial of him to whom we had offered theſe great indignities? How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great ſalvation, ſo great a mercy?

Fourthly, It concerns us to acquaint our ſelves with God, for without it we are in a neceſſity of ſin, and miſery.

1. The Soul unacquainted with God is in a neceſſity of ſinning, *Epheſ.* 4. 14. *Having their underſtanding darkned, alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the blindneſs of their hearts.* For want of acquaintance with God, every thought and imagination of their heart is evil continually, *Rom.* 30. 10, 11. *There is none righteous, no not one. There is none that underſtands, there is none that ſeeketh after God.* Not underſtanding, nor ſeeking after God, is the neceſſary cauſe that there is *none doth good.* The ſoul of man is an Active *being*, which is continually in motion; if it be not in motion to God and in God, it will be in motion from God. Hence it is that the prayer of the wicked is an abomination: that which goes for prayer, God abhors, becauſe they are not acquainted with him, *Iſa.* 1. 3. *The Ox knows his owner, and the Aſs his Maſters crib, but* Iſrael *doth not know me*, verſ. 13. 14. To this, ſaith he, *your incenſe is abomination unto me, their new moons and ſabbaths, the calling of aſſemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even your ſolemn meetings.* Now the reaſon why there is a neceſſity of ſin without acquaintance with God, is, becauſe whatſoever is not done with a good heart, is not good, *Luk.* 6. 45. *The good man out of the good treaſure of his heart bringeth forth good fruit, and*

and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth evil fruit: for out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh. As an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit, so an evil heart cannot bring forth a good action. Now without knowledge, the heart is not good. *Prov.* 19. 2. *That the soul be without knowledge is not good.* And there is no knowledge like the knowledge of God, And acquaintance with him, to make the heart good, *Hos.* 4. 2. *Because there is not truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land; therefore by swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out,* &c. Thus want of knowledge of God, and acquaintance with God, we may plainly see, is the necessary cause of sin. Now there is no greater evil on this side Hell, then that of a necessity of sinning, 2 Pet. 2. 14. Those of which it is said *they cannot cease from sinning,* are called *cursed children.* He that chooseth any sin rather than affliction, doth it through the blindness of his mind. This is laid as a heavy accusation *Job* 39. 21. *For this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.* To choose iniquity rather than affliction, is the greatest folly imaginable. It is one great part of the misery of Hell, that they never cease from sinning; and this is the greatest misery on earth, our being so much under the power of sin. I appeal to any gracious soul that hath the feeling of the burden of sin; what is it's great trouble and sorrow? is it not because of sin? What are his secret moans to God? is it not the sence of corruption? *Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death,* saith *Paul, Rom.* 7. He had been complaining of the mass of corruption that did still press hard upon him, and in

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the ſtrong workings of his ſpirit againſt it, he calls it *The body of death.* It was as grievous to him as if he had been bound to a ſtinking rotten carcaſe. How wretched then is the ſtate of every ſoul unacquainted with God? Who can do nothing but ſin, becauſe they want the right rule of action, a right pattern of imitation, a right principle for action, a right object for action, a right end for action, the only aſſiſtance of action. It concerns us then as we make any difference between good and evil, if we have any reſpect unto holineſs and purity before ſin and iniquity, to ſee to get acquaintance with God; becauſe without acquaintance with God, we are in a woful neceſſity of ſinning.

2. Without acquaintance with God, we are in a neceſſity of miſery. Indeed ſin is a great miſery; and to be in a neceſſity of ſinning, is part of the neceſſity of miſery. But beſides that, there is a neceſſity of miſery of another kind. What is the great imployment of men unacquainted with God? Men labour in the very fire, and weary themſelves for very vanity, *Habak.* 2 13. *This was the miſery of men, becauſe they knew not God.* But in *verſ* 14. there is a promiſe of better days, *When the earth ſhall be filled with the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the ſea.* Then, and not till then, will there be a deliverance from labouring in the fire when there is the knowledge of God. The reaſon of it is, becauſe true ſatisfaction and peace cannot be, till our deſires and enjoyments are a like; and this cannot be, till the ſoul is acquainted with God: For, nothing can fill up the deſires of the ſoul but God. The ſoul of man is mighty ſpacious, ſo that it cannot be filled with the world;

world; and while it feels an emptineſs, it ſtill cryes out for more, and cannot be filled tell it be filled with the fulneſs of God, *Epheſ.* 3. 19. The prodigal ſon had nothing but husks to feed upon, when he was gon from his fathers houſe; he would fain have filled his belly with the husks, but could not; they were not food for the ſoul. When we are departed from God, we have nothing to feed on but the world, and we would fill our ſouls with the world, but cannot; for it is not food for the ſoul. *Acquaintance* with God is the food of the ſoul, *Job* 23. 12. *I have eſteemed the words of his mouth, more then my neceſſary food.* So that a ſoul that is not acquainted with God, is famiſhed for want of food, *Pſal.* 42. 2. *My ſoul thirſteth for God, for the living God. When ſhall I come and appear before God? David* was acquainted with God, but for want of an actual enjoyment, how doth he here breath out the trouble of his ſpirit? *As the Hart panteth after the water-brooks, ſo panteth my ſoul after thee O God.* The ſoul is ſtill panting. Some pant after the duſt of the earth, *Amos* 2. 7. Theſe were of the Serpents ſeed, whoſe curſe from God was, *Duſt ſhalt thou eat:* but the ſeed of Chriſt, they pant for God, and they that pant after God ſhall be filled with the fulneſs of God: but he that panteth after any thing beſides God, will never find any fulneſs: he will feed as upon the duſt of the Earth. And what can follow but diſſatisfaction and miſery? Acquaintance with God is the only way to be freed from a neceſſity of ſin and miſery.

Fifthly, Acquaintance with God is the duty of man, becauſe God himſelf doth acquaint himſelf with man. Shall the King ſeek after acquaintance

with the meaneſt of his ſubjects, and he refuſe acquaintance with his Soveraign? ſhall God acquaint himſelf with man, and ſhall not man acquaint himſelf with God! It is expected among men, that the inferiour ſhould ſeek for acquaintance with the Superiour, and not the Superiour to the inferiour; but yet God out of his wonderful love hath ſought firſt to man for acquaintance. Thus *Prov.* 8. 31. it is ſaid concerning the Son of God, who is meant by *the Eternal Wiſdom of the Father, that he rejoyced in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delight was with the ſons of men.* If God thus delights in converſe and acquaintance with the ſons of men, how much more ought men to rejoyce in converſe and acquaintance with God? *Iſa.* 65. 1. God ſaith, *I am found of them that ſought me not.* All men were departed from God, and not a man that did ſeek after God; there is none that underſtands or ſeeks after God, yet God is found of them. The good ſhepherd ſeeks his loſt ſheep, before the ſheep ſought him, *Cant.* 5 2. When the ſoul is aſleep, it hears the voice of its Beloved that knocks, ſaying, *Open to me my ſiſter, my love, my Dove, my undefiled,* Rev. 3. 20. There Chriſt ſaith to the revolting Church, that he was ready to ſpew them out of his mouth, *Behold I ſtand at the door and knock: If any man will hear me, and open the door, I will come in and ſup with him, and he with me,* Pſal. 68 18. *Thou haſt aſcended on high, thou haſt led captivity captive, thou haſt received gifts for men, ye for the rebellious alſo that the Lord God might dwell among them.* Is it not becoming then that man ſhould open when God knocks? He ſeeks to dwell among the rebellious; is it not fit that man ſhould enter into acquaintance

quaintance with *God*, when *God* doth thus acquaint himſelf with man? Thus I have opened to you the Nature of Acquaintance with *God*, and evidenced it to be the *Duty of Man*, to acquaint himſelf with *God*; let us now make ſome improvements of this Truth.

USE I.

First, Is there to be an acquaintance between the ſoul and *God*? Let us then ſtand and wonder at the great condeſcention of *God*! This may ſurpriſe our ſouls with an extaſie of admiration, that *God* ſhould dwell with man; that the mighty *Jehova* ſhould have ſuch reſpect to the work of his hands, *Pſal.* 113. 5, 6. *Who is like unto the Lord, who dwelleth on high, who humbled himſelf to behold the things that are in heaven, and in earth?* The Pſalmiſt admired *God*, that he humbled himſelf to behold things that are in heaven; and how much more then is he to be admired that he humbled himſelf to acquaint himſelf with man? Let us then be filled with admiration, that *God* ſhould take us ſo nigh unto himſelf. As *Pſal.* 84. *What is man that thou art mindful of him! or the ſon of man that thou ſhouldſt viſit him!* And Joh 7. 17, 18. *What is man that thou ſhouldſt magnifie him! and that thou ſhouldſt ſet thy heart upon him? and that thou ſhouldſt viſit him every Morning!* Man in the pride of his heart ſeeth no ſuch great matter in it, but an humble ſoul is filled with aſtoniſhment. *Iſa.* 57. 15. *Thus ſaith the high and lofty One, which inhabiteth Eternity, whoſe Name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place: with him alſo that is of a contrite & humble ſpirit, to revive the ſpirit of the*

humble, and to revive the hearts of the contrite one
Oh ſaith the humble ſoul, will the Lord have re
ſpect unto ſuch a vile worm as I am? will the Lo
acquaint himſelf with ſuch a ſinful wretch as
am? Will the Lord open his Arms, his boſome
his heart to me? ſhall ſuch a loathſome cre
ture as I find favour in his eyes? In *Ezek.* 16. 1
We have a relation of the wonderful condeſcen
tion of God to man, who is there reſembled t
a wretched Infant caſt out in the day of its birt
in its bloud, and filthineſs, no eye pitying it; ſuc
loathſome creatures are we before God, and ye
when he paſſed by, and ſaw us polluted in ou
blood, *he ſaid unto us, live.* It is doubled, becauſ
of the ſtrength of its nature, *it was the time o*
Love, verſ. 8. This was love indeed that Go
ſhould take a filthy wretched thing, and ſprea
his skirts over it, and cover its nakedneſs, an
ſwear unto it, and enter into a covenant with it
and make it his; that is, that he ſhould eſpouſe
this loathſome thing to himſelf, that he would be
an husband to it; this is love unfathomable, love
unconceiveable, ſelf-principle love; this is the
love of God to man, for God is love: Oh the
depth of the riches of the bounty and goodneſs of
God! How is his love wonderful, and his grace
paſt finding out! How do you find and feel your
hearts affected upon the report of theſe things?
do you not ſee matter of admiration, and cauſe
of wonder? Are you not, as it were, lanched
forth into an Ocean of goodneſs, where you can
ſee no ſhore, nor feel no bottom? Ye may make
a Judgment of your ſelves by the motions and
affections that ye feel in your ſelves at the men-
tion of this. For thus Chriſt judged of the Faith

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of the Centurion, that ſaid unto him, *Lord I am not worthy that thou ſhouldeſt come under my roof*, Mat. 8. 8. *When Jeſus heard this, he marvelled, and ſaid to them that followed him, I ſay unto you, I have not found ſo great faith, no not in Iſrael.* If then you feel not your ſouls mightily affected with this condeſcention of God; Say thus unto your ſouls, What aileth thee, O my ſoul, that thou art no more affected with the goodneſs of God; Art thou dead, that thou canſt not feel? Or art thou blind, that thou canſt not ſee thy ſelf compaſſed about with aſtoniſhing goodneſs! Behold the King of glory deſcending from the habitation of his Majeſty, and coming to viſit thee; heareſt not thou his voice, ſaying, *Open to me my ſiſter: behold, I ſtand at the door and knock. Lift up your ſelves, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlaſting doors, that the King of glory may come in.* Behold, O my ſoul, how he waits ſtill while thou haſt refuſed to open to him! O the wonder of his goodneſs! O the condeſcention of his Love, to viſit me, to ſue unto me, to wait upon me, to be acquainted with me! Thus work up your ſouls into an aſtoniſhment at the condeſcention of God.

USE 2.

Secondly, Is there to be acquaintance between the ſoul and God? Then let us learn to make a right judgement of our own Excellency; let us judge of our ſelves as too high and noble to converſe with this baſe and beggarly world. I am of a nobler Original, than to debaſe my ſelf to ſuch mean things; I am the off-ſpring of God, and ſhall I acquaint my ſelf with earth? I am of

the family of God, and shall I converse with Satan? Is there bread enough in my Fathers house, and shall I perish for hunger? Lift up thy self, O my soul, shake off the intanglements of the flesh, break out of that bondage of the Devil, trample upon the glory of the world, and scorn to let out thy precious desires upon dung and dross; get the Moon under thy feet, cloath thy self with the Sun, put on the Son of Righteousness, come into the palace of God, and acquaint thy self with him; for this is thy glory, this is thy excellency. Ye precious one, who can call God Father, and the Son Brother, who have fellowship with the Father and the Son, who may have communion with the Holy Ghost? What do you lying among the Pots? What do you raking in Dunghils? What do you conversing with the World? Have a holy scorn of these things as below the dignity of your souls: know your worth, esteem of your selves, as of more value then all these lower Treasures. This is your glory and your excellency, that ye are of Gods acquaintance, that ye are Sons of God, Heirs of God, and joynts Heirs with Christ, that ye understand and know God.

There are two things wherein most men are mistaken.

First, In the Nature of Pride. Some look upon that only as Pride, which manifesteth it self in costly Apparel, and bodily Ornaments, beyond the degree and rank of the person. Some look no further than the carriage of one man towards another. Now favourably consider with me, that the greatest Pride in the world is mans undue esteem of himself toward God; and this

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is in the heart of every one by nature. Every one by nature doth lift up himself against God, goes about to dethrone God, and to crown himself: Every one takes counsel in his heart against the Lord, saying *Let us break his bands asunder, and cast his cords from us.* This is the voice of every one that dares willfully to sin. *We will not have God to rule over us.* Yet this is the working of the Pride of a man against God, to thrust God out of the Throne of his Majesty, and to set himself in. For what is Gods glory and respect among his creatures? Is it not this; that he being the *beginning*, and *Author* of *all*, should be likewise the *end* of *all*? And this is the very purpose of God in making of man, that having received himself from God, he should have what he might freely give up to God; so that all man is, and all that he hath, is to be offered to God, as the end and center of all. Now a sinning creature brings God under to serve him, to provide for him. Now though this Pride of man against God be not so much taken notice of, yet it is the very daring sin of the World. It is indeed to be wondered at, that ever creature did cast out the first thoughts of such an attempt. Now consider how far mans Pride is from his true Excellency in his Union with God. We are therefore to distinguish between that high esteem that man is to have of himself, and pride. For man to look upon himself as a *noble being*, and of rank above all the *natural world*, it is not Pride, for thus he is (being a Spiritual understanding Agent) in a capacity of being acquainted with God, of being united to God, and, as I may say, of exchanging himself with God.

Secondly. Another miſtake of moſt men is; concerning their *Dignity* and *Excellency*, and in the rule and meaſure of their *Excellency*. Moſt meaſure their Dignity by the advantage which they have over others in this world; As ſome in their Power and Authority: ſome in their Friends and Relations; ſome in their Riches and Eſtates; ſome in their Wiſdom and Faculties; ſome in their ſtrength and Power. And what more univerſal evil is there then this, for every one into ſomething or other to lift himſelf up in his own eſteem, and in his thoughts to tread upon others, as ſomething inferiour to himſelf? But men lie blinded in their own deluſions, not conſidering what is the true Excellency of man; nor know the right rule by which mans worth is to be judged of. The way for us to judge rightly concerning our ſelves, is to ſee how we ſtand towards God. God is the perfection of excellency; and the nigher we are to God, the greater is our excellency. This is the greatneſs of a Nation, to be nigh to God, *Deut.* 4. 7. *What Nation is there ſo great which hath God ſo nigh unto them?* And *Amos* 8. 7. God is called the Excellency of *Jacob*. God ſweareth not by any thing below himſelf; therefore God is here meant, *Iſa.* 60 19. God is called the *Glory of his people. The Lord ſhall be to thee an everlaſting light, and thy God thy glory.* Now God is the glory of thoſe that are acquainted with him.

Firſt, By vertue of the Relation wherein God ſtands towards them. An intimate Relation to thoſe that are perſons of Dignity, and Worth, doth communicate Worth and Dignity to thoſe who are ſo related to them. As the ſon of a mean man

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is not ſo highly valued and eſteemed as the ſon of a Prince. *David* reckoned it to be a great thing to be Son in-law to a King, 1 *Sam.* 18. 8. *Who am I, and what is my life, or my fathers Family in* Iſrael, *that I ſhould be ſon-in law to the King?* Thus are we to reckon it our Dignity and Excellency to be in nigh relation to God, to be ſons of God, to be heirs of God, and to be the friends of God; what greater honor then this to be in ſuch a nigh relation to the God of Glory? Now the Excellency that we have from this Relation, ariſeth from the excellency of that act which is the Foundation of this Relation, and that is our being born of God, as we are Sons, *Joh* 1. 12, 13. God marrying us to himſelf as he is our husband, *Jer.* 3. *Turn, O back-ſliding Children, ſaith the Lord, for I am married unto you.* God takes us into fellowſhip and communion, and acquaintance with himſelf, as he makes us his friends, and his acquaintance. This act of God doth inſtamp a Worth and Excellency upon man, as the impreſſion of the Kings Seal upon Wax, and makes it of value, *Rev.* 22, 4. It is here ſpoken as the glory of the ſervants of God, *Thoſe that follow the Lamb, they ſhall ſee his face, and his Name ſhall be in their foreheads*; that is, God hath choſen, and, as it were marked them out for his own: and this marking them, and owning them, it ſets a high Dignity upon them, ſuch as ſecures them from the Curſe that is to be upon all beſides, as *Revel.* 9. 4. They are commanded to hurt none *but thoſe who have not the ſeal of God on their foreheads.* This Relation of the ſoul to God, gives the ſoul an excellency, as it doth intereſt the ſoul in the glory and excellency of God himſelf; they are Gods, and God is theirs, 2 *Cor.* 6. 16. *I*

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will dwell in them, and walk with them, and I will be their God, and they ſhall be my people, verſ. 17. He argues from the dignity of this relation, that they ſhould count themſelves too good to converſe with the world; *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye ſeparated, ſaith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing: and I will receive you, and be a father to you, and you ſhall be my ſons and daughters, ſaith the Lord.* Thus you ſee the dignity that is upon the ſoul by its acquaintance with God. Our relation to God in our acquaintance with him, doth ennoble us, lift us above the world, make us that we are too good for the company of thoſe that are not acquainted with God. It is then no pride in us thus to eſteem of our ſelves, to have high thoughts of our ſelves, becauſe of that acquaintance which our ſouls are to have with God. It is pride for to think too highly of our ſelves: but it is ſobriety to think of our ſelves according to that acquaintance which we have with God, *Rom.* 12. 3. *I ſay through the grace of God given to me, to every one that is among you, not to think of himſelf more highly then he ought to think; but to think ſoberly according as God hath dealt to every man the meaſure of faith.* Here the Apoſtle commands them to meaſure the eſteem which they have of themſelves, by the meaſure of faith which they have from God; becauſe by faith they come to be valued excellent in the eye of God. So likewiſe we are to meaſure our eſteem which we have of our ſelves, by the meaſure of our acquaintance which we have with God! becauſe by acquaintance with him, we come to be truly excellent. And while we do thus, we ſhall not think more highly of our ſelves then we ought to think: for

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vvhile vve account our ſelves excellent becauſe of our acquaintance vvith God, vve in lifting up our ſelves magnifie God; and vvhile vve thus glory, vve glory in the Lord, 1 *Cor.* 1. 31. But novv herein vve are to bevvare of tvvo things.

Firſt, That vve diſtinguiſh carefully betvveen our capacity of being acquainted vvith God, and our being actually acquainted vvith him: for our capacity, or being ſo as that vve may be acquainted vvith God, is of no vvorth, unleſs vve be actually acquainted vvith him. We are in a remote capacity naturally as men, and vve are in a more nigh capacity by the mercy and covenant of God; but this adds no true worth to the ſoul vvithout the actual acquaintance of the ſoul vvith God. Yea, man is the vvorſe for this, if he be vvithout the other; for if man being made fit for enjoyment of God, and communion vvith him, and never attain to an enjoyment of him, he becomes more vile then thoſe things vvhoſe nature is inferiour, if they attain to the perfection of that nature. And it is like to fare vvorſe vvith man, if he fall ſhort of the glory of God, becauſe he vvas capable of the glory of God, than vvith beaſts vvhich are not capable of it. And again, in regard of that more nigh capacity vvherein vve are by Jeſus Chriſt of acquaintance vvith God, if vve are not really acquainted vvith God, vve ſhall thereby not only have no addition of excellency, but thereby vve ſhall be more vile and miſerable: and therefore thoſe vvho through the mercy of God have been in the viſible Church, and have heard of the good vvill of God to man through Chriſt, and knovv that God is ready to entertain them into acquaintance vvith himſelf; if they ſhall fall

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ſhort of this, their condemnation will be greater then that of thoſe who never heard of Gods invitation, and his grace in Jeſus Chriſt. If we therefore ſhall glory in our capacity of being of the acquaintance of God, and neglect to be really acquainted with him, we do but as the *Jews* of old, who cried out, *The temple of the Lord are theſe*, Jer. 7. 4. And the nigher we are to God, if we do not come to a thorow cloſure with him, the nigher we are to the ſtroak of his Wrath: as the nigher any is to Musket-ſhot, the greater will the force of it be upon him. Diſtinguiſh therefore between our capacity of being acquainted with God, and our actual acquaintance with him.

Secondly, we muſt beware leſt in our eſteem of our ſelves, we lay the foundation of our glory in our ſelves. There is that in every ones corrupt nature which doth provoke him to it: ſo that I dare boldly ſay, that there is not a man in his corrupt natural ſtate, who doth not ſome way or other lift up himſelf in his own eſteem for ſomething of his own. And we are apt to make every ſpiritual excellency to be matter for pride and ſelf-conceitedneſs. We do not ſufficiently eye God as the Fountain, the Author, the Foundation, the Rule and Pattern of all our Excellency. Such is the way wherein God receiveth man to acquaintance with himſelf, that he might hide pride from his eyes, and that no fleſh might glory in his preſence, 1 *Cor.* 1. 29. If we therefore lay the foundation of our glory in our ſelves, and pleaſe our ſelves in the ſparks that we have kindled, we ſhall glory in our ſhame, and lie down in ſorrow. This high eſteem which we are to have of

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our ſelves, becauſe of our acquaintance with God, it doth not at all contradict that precious grace of humility, but they rather help forward one another; for the more any eſteems of himſelf, becauſe of that relation which he hath to God, the leſs is the eſteem of himſelf, becauſe of any thing of his own; the more we make God the matter of our glory, the leſs do we glory in our ſelves. The more we apprehend of our Excellency, being from God, the leſs account do we make of all other ſeeming Excellencies. When the light of the Sun ariſeth, then all Star-light diſappears.

Firſt, All Dignity we have, ſeems to ariſe from that relation which we have to God in acquaintance with him.

Secondly, By acquaintance with God, we come to have an abſolute poſitive Dignity which is real in our perſons, yet ſtill depending upon God: As by our union with Chriſt we come to have a righteouſneſs imputed, which is our juſtification, and a righteouſneſs likewiſe inherent, which is our ſanctification; ſo by our acquaintance with God, we have a dignity, as it were, imputed by our relation to God, and a dignity real, which is that excellency whereby we are made abſolutely better. By acquaintance with God we come to be like God; and the Image of God in us, is the greateſt excellency that we are capable of. When *Moſes* had been fourty days in the Mount with God, his face did ſhine with ſuch a brightneſs, that the people could not behold him: ſo thoſe that converſe with God, they retain a luſter, which ſhines in their converſe with men. The Image or picture of any worthy perſon, is ſteem-

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ed by them that eſteem the perſon, and this eſteem of it, is from a relation which it hath to that perſon; but now the children of any perſon whom we love, being a lively image of their fathers perſon, have another value upon them, having not only a relation worthy, becauſe of their reſemblance in the outward lineament, but a real participation of nature and diſpoſition, which they receive from their father: So there is an excellency in thoſe that are acquainted with God, not only as being in Relation to him, but as receiving, and being partakers of the Divine Nature. As Children learn to pronounce their words according to the pronunciation of the Mother, or Nurſe, with whom they converſe, (as every one is apt to be formed unto the manner and diſpoſition of the company wherein they moſt uſually are); thus thoſe who converſe with God, they become in ſome meaſure like unto God; and this is poſitive perſonal excellency which thoſe have which converſe with God. Thus the Apoſtle *John* urgeth concerning that perfection of glory and excellency, which hereafter is to be upon thoſe that are the Sons of God. *But it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be, but we know that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.* In Heaven we ſhall be like God, becauſe we ſhall ſee God; and on earth thoſe that converſe with God, ſhall in ſome meaſure be like God according to their meaſure of acquaintance with him. And ſo *Paul* argues concerning this preſent life, 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. *But we all with open face beholding as in a glaſs, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, even as by the ſpirit of*

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the Lord. Here we ſee clearly that beholding the glory of the Lord, doth change into the ſame image of God, and likewiſe that this image of God only is the glory of man; for that is meant by, *From glory to glory:* that is, from one degree of glorious ſimilitude, to another degree of glorious reſemblance and likeneſs to God. Thus ye have ſeen that the excellency of man conſiſteth in his acquaintance with God; and that by the vertue of his relation to God, he hath an imputed excellency; and an excellency by his propriety in God, in whom is all excellency: and that by his converſe with God, and acquaintance with him, he becomes really like God, which is his inherent excellency. Let us then reckon of our ſelves as thoſe who have their Dignity and Excellency from God, and in this let us glory, That we know God, and are acquainted with God. This is the *Second Uſe* of this Propoſition.

USE 3.

Thirdly, If man ought to be acquainted with God, then let us all enquire into our ſelves; whether we are acquainted with him or no. Let us every one turn into our own boſoms, and ask our ſelves this queſtion; Thou haſt heard, O my ſoul, that which is thy great Duty, that which is the very end of thy Creation, and thy Redemption, and that the higheſt perfection of thy nobleſt faculty conſiſts in knowing God, and being acquainted with him, which contains a nigh union to him, and intimate converſe with him, and mutual communion to God, and from God

God, and radicated unmoveable love to God: theſe are excellent things O my ſoul, what is thy caſe? Art thou one of thoſe precious ones, which converſeſt oft with God, and talk oft of God, whom he will make up with his Jewels? Or art thou one of thoſe wretched Creatures, who are alienated from the life of God, by reaſon of the ignorance that is in thee? Or art thou one of thoſe who having been ſometimes afar off, art now made nigh to God by the blood of Chriſt, and ſo art lead into fellovvſhip and communion vvith the Father and the Son by the Spirit? Or art thou one of thoſe vvho looks upon God afar off, and upon vvhom God looks afar off? I beſeech you every one of you deal ſeriouſly and accurately with your ſelves in this inquiry, for it is moſt certain, that moſt men in the vvorld, yea in the viſible Church, are not acquainted vvith God. Thus it hath been in all generations from the beginning of the World, and thus it is at this day: the people of God have been like a little flock of ſheep, vvhile the reſt are like locuſts, covering the vvhole face of the earth. The people of God have ſtill complained that they are but as the gleaning of the vintage, and as tvvo or three Olive-berries in the top of the utmoſt branches, vvhen the reſt have been gathered. The viſible Church of God, in reſpect of the reſt of the vvorld, how ſmall a part is it! In the viſible Church, hovv fevv live up to their Religion, by any conſiderable profeſſion! Hovv little difference is there betvveen moſt among us, and Heathens! And of thoſe that profeſs, and lay claim to ſomething beyond others among vvhom they live, hovv many betray their Profeſſion by their

their vvicked Practiſe and vvorldly Converſation? So that vvhen vve have made Enquiry, there vvill remain very few of thoſe that are really Acquainted vvith God; it concerns us then to be very diligent in Inquiry, what is our Caſe how we ſtand towards God.

Secondly, I ſhall be the more earneſt in preſſing you upon a diligent ſearch into what Acquaintance you have gotten with God; becauſe, I know that thoſe that have leaſt Acquaintance with God, are moſt apt to neglect this Enquiry. It may be a tender ſoul that hath been much with God, will be ready upon the firſt hint to enter into the ſecrets of his own Heart, to look over his evidences, to call to mind, when have I drawn nigh to God? When have I Converſed with God? When have I Communion with God? Hath my Life been a walking with God? Have I dwelt with God, and made my abode with him? Thus the Soul that makes high account of its acquaintance with God, will be trying and examining in ſelf; and it may be upon its more awakened ſigns of its ſometimes departing from *God*, or feeling ſome preſent ſtrangueſs, it will be apt to conclude of it ſelf, ſurely I am none of thoſe precious ones, whoſe life is a converſe with *God*. But the common generation of the World. Oh how hardly will they be brought to ask themſelves this queſtion, whether they are of the acquaintance of God or no! How often have they been urged with a great and vehement affection upon tryal, how their ſouls ſtand towards *God*? and hitherto they have neglected it. Many are inconſiderate as to think what is ſpoken is nothing to them: they come and ſit in the Congre-

gregation, but their hearts are out of reach, out of the ſhot of the Word; ſo they go away, and the vvord to them is, as if it had not been. Many are ſo light and vain, and frothy in their ſpirits, as that the ſtreams vvill almoſt as ſoon return to their Fountain, as they vvill be perſwaded to turn in and enquire into their own Souls. In all Naturally there is an averſneſs to come to the Light, that their Works and Hearts may be Manifeſted. If I ſhould come to you one by one, and beſeech you vvith the greateſt earneſtneſs, wherevvith I vvere able, vvhen you go from the Congregation to take Opportunity to go in Secret, and enter upon Tryal vvith your Hearts, and ask your ſelves throughly this Queſtion, and let them not alone till you have a clear determinate Anſwer, vvhether you are in a State of Acquaintance vvith *God*; I fear you vvould go, one to his Pleaſures, another to this Vanity, and another to his Covetouſneſs, and almoſt all of you neglect this Work of ſo great Concernment. Let me therefore urge you vvith all earneſtneſs, that you vvill not account it a ſmall matter, vvhether you be acquainted vvith *God* or not; and ſo neglect this Trial of your ſelves: But bring your Hearts up roundly to the Examination, yeild not to their unreaſonable vvithdrawings, force them to anſwer. If you make any account of the Charge of *God*, if you make any account of the Excellency of Man, if you vvould not loſe the higheſt Priviledge of the Creature, if you have any eſteem of the Life of Heaven, know your ſelves in this, vvhether you are in a State of Acquaintance vvith *God*, and be ſerious and diligent in this Enquiry.

Thirdly, Becauſe men are ſo exceeding apt to be

be miſtaken, and to miſapprehend concerning themſelves, that they are in a ſtate of acquaintance with God, while they are meer ſtrangers unto him; ſuch as thoſe whom our Saviour ſpeaks of, *Matth.* 7. 22, 23. *Many will ſay to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not Propheſied in thy Name, and in thy Name have caſt out Devils, and in thy Name done many wonderful works?* and then he will profeſs unto them *I never knew you; depart from me ye workers of iniquity.* They take it for granted, that becauſe of ſuch priviledges, and gifts, & common graces which they had, therefore they were well acquainted with Chriſt; but our Saviour anſwereth, *I never knew you*; that is, I never had any acquaintance with you. Such are thoſe who are reſembled to us by five fooliſh Virgins, *Matth.* 25. 11. The five fooliſh Virgins come when the door is ſhut, and ſay, *Lord, Lord, open unto us*; *but he anſwereth, Verily I ſay unto you, I know you not*; That is, never had acquaintance with you: You never knew me in the time of your life, and I will not know you now: You were aſhamed to own me before Men, and I will be aſhamed to own you before my Father. Men are ſo apt to be miſtaken in Judgment of themſelves, that they think themſelves Rich and encreaſing with goods, and to have need of nothing, when they are wretched, miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked. And this made *David, Pſal.* 139. 24. to cry out after he had been trying himſelf, *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and ſee if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlaſting.* This unaptneſs in us to make a right judgement of our ſelves in our relation to God, ariſeth,

First, From that deep Root of self-love that is in us by Nature, whereby we are apt to apprehend well of our selves, and please our selves with a good conceit of our selves, though we are never so bad. And such is the nature of this affection, that it blinds our eyes, and prejudiceth the mind, that it cannot make a right judgment. As affection in some Parents to their Children, makes them reckon that which is a blemish, to be a beauty in their Children; so doth inordinate self-love work in men, in the judgment of themselves. Men when they judge themselves, they look into a flattering glass which presents them in greater beauty than that which is their own.

Secondly, we judg amiss of our selves, because we take not a right Rule for our judgments, as those whom *Paul* speaks, 2 *Corinthians* 10. 12. *Some commend themselves, but they measure themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves are not wise.* If we take our selves to be the Rule and Measure, then we cannot discern our own crookedness and irregularness.

Thirdly, We judge amiss of our selves, because of the deceitfulness of our hearts. *The heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?* Jer. 17. 9. *Gross wickedness is apparent to the Pur-blind Eye*; but where there is an abstaining from gross outward Sins, there are special workings of Corruption, such as pride, self-love, distrust of God, and love of the World; any of which shut up the Soul against God, as with Bolts and Bars; and these lying inward are not discerned. Other Accounts may be given of the unaptness to make a due judgment of our selves: It concerns us therefore

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to be exact in our tryal, and truſt not to a ſudden anſwer; for we are ready to make a ſhort work of it, and to ſave our ſelves the labour, and to ſit down with charitable thoughts of our ſelves. Whatſoever anſwer therefore our hearts give us, let us ſee cleared, and have ſuch reaſon for it, that we may know how to proceed with our ſelves, upon a right judgment of our ſelves. The chief work of trial in this particular acquaintance with God, will be from thoſe particulars wherein I opened the nature of the ſouls acquaintance with God. Let us therefore take thoſe Heads, and our own Experience of our ſelves, and by a rational deduction, let us find out our own eſtate.

As thus, Thoſe that are acquainted with God are brought nigh to God. Whereas ſometimes there was a ſtrangeneſs and remoteneſs, a vaſt ſeparation, now the partition is taken out of the way, and I am made one in Chriſt. I have took God to be my portion, and my Father; I have been a Prodigal, and have departed from him; but I finding my ſelf loſt and undone, and that nothing could ſatisfie my ſoul in the world, therefore I reſolved I would return to my Fathers houſe, and try if he would receive me again into his Family; and ſo I have done. I have caſt off my old converſe with the world, and with corruption; I have broken my league with Hell, and have entered into a covenant with the Father, through his Son Jeſus Chriſt; therefore I may comfortably conclude that I am now in a ſtate of acquaintance with God.

But if in the enquiry into my ſelf I find not theſe things, if I find that now I am as in former

dayes: I have felt no such change in my self, and that all things are with me as they were of old, I never was sensible of any loss in my self; I never knew what strangeness and nighness to God meant; I never understood what Union with God, and distance from God, was; this signifies ill, it is a symptome of a bad state; of a state of unacquaintance with God.

2. So again, for our converse with God. He that is acquainted with God, he hath had his converse with God, he hath dwelt with God, and God with him; he hath supped with Christ, and Christ with him; his great business and employment hath been nigh God, in those things wherein is most of God. If I find my soul much conversing with God, oft sending out breathings to Heaven, oft casting my eye towards God, if I find the great work of my mind to be with God, my great business lies in Heaven, my treasure is laid up there, and my thoughts, and desires, and joys, and delights, and meditations are there; I may comfortably conclude that I am in some measure acquainted with God. But if in the inquiry into my self, I find that I have my whole converse with the world, that I can afford no time for Prayer to God in my family, and in secret; if I find all the day long my cares, and desires, and thoughts, run out most naturally, and fully without controle towards the things of the world, or that I will mind my self in a natural carnal way, and mind not the things of God; this signifies to me my unacquaintance with God, and it will be an ungrounded presumption in me to reckon of my self any other then a stranger to him.

3. So for communion and fellowship, which

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is in acquaintance. Thoſe that are intimately acquainted, their communion in the way of diſcourſe is very frequent, in making known their thoughts and apprehenſions, their fears and wants; their minds are open one to another, and that which is the propriety of one, is by their acquaintance communicated to the uſe of both. If then I can find in reviewing the workings of my ſoul, that there hath been this ſight of Heaven, this Spiritual Communion between my ſoul and *God*; that my heart hath been open to *God*; that I have gon to *God* when my heart hath been burdened with ſorrow, I have diſcharged it into the boſom of *God*, as into the boſom of a friend; that in my doubts I have betaken my ſelf to him, expecting comfort from him; that upon hearing his voice I have opened to him, and upon my opening he hath come in with ſmiles of love, and given me tokens of his favour; theſe things ſignifie a ſtate of acquaintance with *God*: but if I know not what it is to have given up my ſoul to *God*, to be his, and to have taken *God* to be mine, if I have had experience of receiving nothing elſe from *God*, but a partaking of the things of the world: if I have not been wont to communicate the workings of my mind to God, it betokeneth my unacquaintance with *God*.

4. And again, for that friendly working of love and affection in the ſoul towards *God*. Thoſe that are in a ſtate of acquaintance are ſuppoſed to comply with each other in kindneſs, and love, and good will, and affection. If then I can upon ſearch into my ſelf, find that *God* hath the higheſt room in my affections, that my heart is his, that his love is prevailing with me, above the

love of all things beſides, & that I love thoſe that are his beloved for his ſake, then I have in me a ſign of regal acquaintance with God; for love is the very quinteſſence of acquaintance: but if in the ſearch into the workings of my mind I can find no ſuch friendly compliance, but that God was ſtill thwarting and croſſing my deſigns, that I ſhould find my ſelf better content if there were no God, and that thoſe workings of my mind that are about God are ſower, harſh, and tearing upon my Spirit; then it is to be feared, that I have no acquaintance with *God*.

And haſt thou made an impartial inquiry into thy ſtate? And how ſtand things between thy Soul and *God*? Art thou acquainted with him, or art thou not? Conſider ſeriouſly O ſinners, that this is one of the weightieſt queſtions in the world; and if this queſtion were but well reſolved, it would put an end to a thouſand other queſtions. He that can ſay of *God* and Chriſt, this is my beloved, and this is my friend, he need not very ſolicitouſly ask what news? He hath heard good news from Heaven, which will eaſily ballance all, come what will come, he need not much paſs, as long as there ſtands that one Text in the Bible, *That all ſhall work together for good to them that love God*. He hath no cauſe to go a begging to the world, and to ſay, *who will ſhew me any good?* As long as the Lord hath ſhined upon him with the light of his countenance, He need not complain, what ſhall I do: I have loſt this or that dear friend; when he hath found him, who can make up all with one look whom he can never loſe. In a word, he need not ask how ſhall I do to live? And

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what ſhall I eat, and what ſhall I drink, and wherewithall ſhall I be cloathed, ſo long as he knows that he hath a noble friend, who will eaſe him of all his care, and never ſee him want? Well then, haſt thou anſwered this great queſtion or not? Or wilt thou do by thy conſcience, as *Felix*, put it off, and ſay, thou wilt hear of theſe matters, at ſome more convenient ſeaſon; and I wonder when that more convenient ſeaſon will [illegible]. And why not now, I pray? What ſeaſon more fit than the Preſent? I am ſure God ſaith, *Now is the acceptable time*; and do you know better than he? What haſt thou to do that is more neceſſary? Speak out I pray, is the following of thy pleaſures? Is the ſerving of Satan? Is the damning of thy Soul, more neceſſary than the ſaving of it? Is the life and death of a Soul nothing? Are everlaſting glory and miſery ſmall matters? Is the love or hatred of thy God ſo inconſiderable a thing? Awake O ſinner, what meaneſt thou? Ariſe ſpeedily, and look about thee man. Conſider ſeriouſly as thou valueſt thy Soul, what beſt becomes a ſinner in thy condition: What anſwer ſhall I return to my Maſter? Are not theſe things worth the thinking of? Shall I ſay for all this, that thou art not at leiſure to look after an intereſt in his favour, or any thing that tends to it? Shall I tell him that thou haſt ſomthing of greater weight, and higher Importance to trouble your head with? And do you in ſober ſadneſs think ſo? For you make account, *that* excuſe is ſufficient? I pray then make uſe of it your ſelf (for I dare not.) When God ſhall come to ask you, why you did no more vigorouſly

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mind the getting acquaintance with himſelf, tell him then if you think that anſwer will ſerve your turn, that you were not at leiſure, you had ſuch urgent occaſions which took up the whole of your time, ſuch and ſuch a friend you had, who ſent for you to the Tavern, and you could not poſſibly come when he invited you, tell him if you believe that plea will hold water, that you would have been glad to have come upon his invitation, but that you were taken up with ſuch good old friends, the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil. How do you think ſuch an anſwer will be taken? You may think to put us off with ſuch kind of reaſons as this: but do you hope by this anſwer to ſatisfie your Judge? Believe it ſinner, God will not thus be put off. Wherefore I do again with all the earneſtneſs I can for my ſoul renew my ſuit to thee, that thou wouldeſt act like a man in his wits; make ſome ſerious inquiry into the ſtate and condition of thy ſoul. And conſider for the Lords ſake again and again, before you ſend me away thus, what errand I come to you on: It is to treat with you about a rich match for thy poor undone ſoul: therefore conſider well what you do before you make light of this buſineſs, and know when you are well offered; believe it, *God* will not long ſend after you in this manner, and you are not like every day to have ſuch proffers; Divine Patience and Goodneſs will not always plead at this rate with you; *God* will ere long ſay, let them alone: the Lord will erre long ſpeak to ſcornful ſinners in ſuch language that will make their ears to tingle; he will deſpiſe and ſlight as well as they: and who is like to have the worſt of it at laſt,

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I leave to any rational man to judge? The time is coming, when your ungodly hearts ſhall ake, to ſee him whom you ſhall have had for your husband; when you ſhall have him for your Judge, whom you might have had for your Advocate. And though we could not get you to be willing to be acquainted with him, no, not ſo much as to have any ſerious thoughts about it, or to make any enquiry after him to inform your ſelf concerning him; yet you ſhall have him for your enemy whether you will or no. But O let us not part thus! let me, a man like thy ſelf, reaſon the caſe a little more with thee; come tell me poor ignorant creature, thou that ſtill ſtandeſt demurring, and ſayſt, Shall I, ſhall I? what evil is there in thy God, that thou ſhouldeſt be thus hardly brought, ſo much as to diſcourſe this buſineſs with thy own ſoul? What is the reaſon that thou ſcarce thinkeſt it worth the while to trouble thy head about any thing that doth concern your intereſt in his love? Thou that mindeſt his love ſo little, tell me what doſt thou think had become of thee long before this, if God had regarded thee as little as thou doſt him? What wouldeſt thou have done, had the Lord ſaid to any Diſeaſe, the leaſt of his Meſſengers, fetch that Rebel before me, that values not my favour; he ſhall know what my anger is, ſeeing he will not prize my love. O what a lamentable caſe hadſt thou been in, had God but done by thee as thou haſt by him? *Acquaintance with God*! methinks ſinful man ſhould ſtand and wonder at ſuch a word; methinks he ſhould be even ſurprized with an extaſie of admiration; and ſay, and will God indeed be acquainted with

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ſuch a Worm, ſuch a dead Dog, ſuch a Rebel as I? *Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of Man that thou ſhouldeſt make ſuch an offer to him?* One would think thou ſhouldſt no more diſpute the matter then *Eſter* did, when that great Monarch made her his Queen. Were it but in ſenſible things, that nothing near ſuch an offer were made (which is impoſſible) man would think the very queſtioning in ſuch a caſe a ſtrange Folly. One would think that every one of Gods Enemies that have been in open Rebellion againſt him, and are utterly unable to make their part good againſt him, when they hear of ſuch Tearms of Mercy from their Prince, who hath all their lives in their hand, ſhould rejoyce at this News, and ſay, *How beautiful are the feet of them which bring ſuch Tidings?* How did *Benhadad* look, when inſtead of a Halter he had a Coach? When inſtead of Rebel, he heard Brother? Whatever we may think of theſe things, *David* thought it high time for him to bid ſuch a Meſſenger welcome, and to open his heart for the receiving his God: Hear what he ſaith to his own heart and others, *Pſal.* 24. *Lift up your heads, O ye Gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlaſting Doors, that the King of Glory may come in.* And becauſe the door of mens hearts is lock'd, and barr'd, and bolted, and men are in a deep ſleep, and will not hear the knocking that is at the Gate, though it be loud, though it be a King: Therefore *David* knocks again, *Lift up your Heads, O ye Gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlaſting Doors:* Why, what haſte, ſaith the ſinner? What haſte? Why, here's the King at your Gates; and that not an ordinary King neither, he is a glorious King that will honour you

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ſo far, if you open quickly, as to lodge within, to take up his abode in your Houſe, to dwell with you; but the Soul for all this doth not yet open, but ſtands ſtill queſtioning, as if it were an Enemy, rather than a friend that ſtood there, and ask, who is the *King of Glory*? Who? He anſwers again, *It is the Lord of Hoſts*; He, that if you will not open quickly and thankfully to, can eaſily pull your Houſe down about your Ears; He is the Lord of Hoſts, that King who hath a mighty Army always at his command, who ſtands ready for their Commiſſion, and then you ſhould ſoon know who it is you might have had for your Friend; *Lift up therefore your Heads, O ye Gates*; Open quickly, ye that had rather have God for your Friend then for your Enemy. Oh why ſhould not the Soul of every Sinner cry out, Lord, the Door is locked, and thou haſt the Key, I have been trying what I can do, but the Wards are ſo ruſty that I cannot poſſibly turn the Key: But Lord throw the Door off the Hinges, any thing in the world, ſo thou wilt but come in and dwell here: Come, O mighty God, break through Doors of Iron, and Bars of Braſs,, and make way for thy ſelf by thy Love and Power. Come Lord and make thy ſelf Welcome, all that I have is at thy ſervice: O fit my Soul to entertain thee! But where is the Sinner that is in this Note? How ſeldome do poor Creatures deſire Gods Company, or bewail his abſence? Where almoſt are the men and vvomen to be found, that do in good earneſt long to be Acquainted with God? Men are naturally ſtrangers to God, and it is a wonderful difficult thing to perſwade men to enter into ſo much as a ſerious deliberate Conſideration of

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theſe things. Though it be ſo infinitely for their intereſt; though the God that made them, out of pity to their ſouls deſire it, though he ſend his Embaſſadors in His Name to beſeech them to be reconciled unto God, againſt whom they have been in open Arms; though in infinite mercy he perſwade them to lay down their Weapons, and promiſe them Free and General Pardon, and to receive them into Favour, and to forget and forgive; yet where is the Sinner almoſt to be found that with any thankfulneſs doth cloſe with theſe tenders? Now it being a buſineſs of ſuch infinite concernment, and it being the very vvork and buſineſs of a Miniſter of Chriſt to bring God and man into Union, to get man acquainted with God, I ſhall in the next place labour to inforce this Exhortation upon the hearts of ſinners, and do what I can poſſible to prevail vvith them that are as yet ſtrangers, to get acquainted vvith God, that they may have peace, and that thereby good might come unto them.

EXHORTATION.

Once more, poor ſinners, That God which can in a moment ſtop thy breath, and ſend thee into Hell, doth offer to be friends with thee. If thou wilt come upon his invitation, well and good, thou art a happy man for ever; if not, thou wilt rue the day that ever thou wert born: yet, through mercy the matter is not gon ſo far, but that thou mayeſt (if you will now at laſt in good earneſt humble thy ſelf to him) be received into Favour. Behold, a Pardon, Mercy, and Grace, ſtand aſtoniſhed, O ye Heavens, at this infinite con-

condescention, Wonder O ye Angels, and pry into this kindness. Was there ever such condescention, love, and goodness heard of? If thou didst but understand, O stupid sinner, what an offer is made to thee, thou couldest not but adore that goodness that can pardon and forget such offences, and receive such a Creature into Favour; thou wouldest also cry out with as great admiration as he did; *what manner of love!* you would think it a mercy not to be paralell'd, a kindness never to be forgotten, a proposal by no means to be refused. Now that I may, if possible, prevail with some that are yet afar off, to come near, I shall enforce this Exhortation with many powerful Motives, the least of which (were men but well in their Wits as to Spiritual matters, were the world not to a Wonder Fools, in the great affairs of their Souls and Eternity) might easily prevail. O that I might prevail! O that some might be perswaded! O that God would put Life and Power into these Words, that they might prove effectual to the intended ends! O that some poor Rebellious sinners might be made to close with the most advantagious Offers that ever were, or could be made to Creatures in our condition!

MOTIVES.

The first *Head* of *Motives* that I shall insist upon to inforce this *Exhortation*, shall be taken from the Nature of the Person that I would have you acquainted with. Consider well what kind of Friend you are like to have of him; and if, after you have well weighed what I shall (with Gods leave)

leave) ſay, you can find out any one in Heaven or in Earth that vvill be a better Friend to you, and ſtand you in more ſtead; if in all the World you bring one that deſerves better at your hands, and is more worthy of your choiceſt Love, and Acquaintance, if I bid you to your Loſs, Why then let me bare the Name of a Cheater for Ever. And if after Trial, through trial, and intimate Acquaintance, you find your ſelf deceived, and that it vvas not vvorth the while to give your ſelf ſo much trouble, Why then let me be Branded to Eternity, for the verieſt Lyer and Impoſtor in the World. For my part, I envy not men their happineſs, but I vviſh with all my heart, that men would do that which may be moſt for their intereſt. It was the Counſel of *Epictetus*, none of the weakeſt men, though a Heathen, *Make choyce of that which is really moſt Excellent; and if there be a Friend to be found better than thy God, the firſt thing thou doſt, get an Intereſt in him.* But conſider, vvhether there be not a contradiction in the Tearms, *Better than the beſt*; it's perfect Nonſence. I know it's impoſſible for any one that hath right apprehenſions of God; to undervalue him. Wherefore it is a grand Piece of Religion, to have clear apprehenſions of God; ſuch can't but believe him to be infinitly Lovely, Wiſe, and Powerful, and to be obeyed in all things; and all the reaſon in the world to acquieſce in his Will, who is ſo Good and ſo Wiſe; ſuch will place Happineſs in nothing below his Favour. VVherefore I think *Plutarch* was not miſtaken, who affirmed, *That mans life was given him of God, only to get the knowledge of God.* But I ſhall be a little more particular in ſpeaking to the excellent qualifications of

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him, whom I would fain get every poor ſinner acquainted with.

Firſt, He is the moſt loving and kind friend. Poor ignorant Creatures that are ſtrangers to him, they talkt at a mad rate concerning him: thoſe that know him not, will be ſpeaking bad, and thinking worſe of him; but, O did they but knovv vvhat God is to them that are acquainted with him, had they but converſed with him themſelves, did they but ſee what entertainment he gives, had they but been in his company, and experienced what ſome have experienced, had they but beheld how affectionately he imbraces them which come to him, they would quickly ſay that it was a falſe report; and wicked ſcandal, that the Devil and the World, which know not God, had raiſed of him; they would ſoon cry out, that they would not for a world but that they had been at his houſe, and that they have cauſe to bleſs God for the day that ever they knew ſuch and ſuch, who brought them acquainted with ſuch a friend; they will never while they live, for the future, believe any thing that is ſpoken againſt God or Chriſt, let vvho vvill ſpeak it. Is this the God they had ſuch hard thoughts of? Is this the kindneſs that they did ſo ſlight? Is this the friend that they vvere ſo loath to come to? And thus an ingenious ſoul vvill even be aſhamed that it ſhould ever harbour ſuch lovv thoughts of him, vvhom novv to their comfort they have found beyond apprehenſion kind. Believe it Sirs, you can't conceive vvhat a friend you ſhall have of God, vvould you but be perſvvaded to enter into Covenant vvith him, to be his, vvholly his; I tell you many, that

ſometimes think, and do as you do now, that is, ſet light by Chriſt and hate *God*, and ſaw no lovelineſs in him, are now quite of another mind, they would not for ten thouſand world quit their intereſt in him. O who dare ſay that he is a hard Maſter? Who that knows him, will ſay he is an unkind friend? O what do poor creatures ail that they do entertain ſuch harſh, ſower thoughts of *God*? What, do you think there is nothing in that Scripture, *Pſal.* 31. 19. *O how great is thy goodneſs which thou haſt laid up for them that fear thee*! Doth the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeak too largely? Doth he ſay more than he and others could prove? Ask him, and he will tell you in *verſ.* 21. that he bleſſeth *God* theſe were things he could ſpeak to, from his own perſonal experience, and many thouſands as well as he, to whom the Lord hath ſhewed his marvellous kindneſs, and therefore he doth very paſſionately plead with the people of *God* to love him, and more highly to expreſs their ſenſe of his goodneſs, that the world might be encouraged alſo to have good thoughts of him. What Nation under Heaven can ſay they have not taſted of his goodneſs, *Pſal.* 33. 5. *All the earth is full of the goodneſs of the Lord.* Read over the hundred forty fifth *Pſalm*, and let us hear then what you have to ſay againſt *God*. Some indeed may ſpeak of the might of *Gods* terrible acts; ſome that have deſpiſed his love, have felt his power and juſtice; as for theſe we cannot think them competent Judges, in this caſe; they will not, it may be, commend *Gods* goodneſs: yet even they cannot, will not condemn *God* of injuſtice, but exclaim againſt themſelves for their unſpeakable folly in ſlighting

ing his kindneſs when it was tendered to them. But as for others, ask them, and they will declare the goodneſs of *God*, they will abundantly utter the Memory of his great goodneſs, and ſing of his righteouſneſs. Do but try poor ſinner, do but try, come a little nearer, and believe your own experience; and if after a thorow knowledge of *God*, and a real acquaintance with him, you can ſay that his favour is not to be ſought after, his love not worth the deſiring; why then I have done, I have no more to ſay. I am ſure if *God* were, as the Devil and the world repreſent him to be; in ſo many thouſands of years, among ſo many thouſands and millions that have been acquainted with him, and entertained by him, ſome of them would have complained before this, we ſhould at one time or other have heard ſomething againſt him. Now I challenge all the world to produce me but an experienced ſolid Saint, that when he acted like himſelf, and after he had been in the company of *God*, and had been feaſted by him, could ſay that he kept a ſhort houſe; eſpecially could we but enquire of thoſe that ſit down at his Table, and are always in his preſence; which of them all have a word to ſay againſt him? but of that more hereafter. No, no, it is in ſinners themſelves, there lies the fault; they believe the malicious father of lyes, they eaſily credit the unexperienced ignorant world: and how little reaſon you have to believe ſo malicious enemies before the Word of Truth, I leave your ſelves to determine. O why will you take up a ſlander againſt your Creator ſo eaſily? Why will you receive ſuch great things wherein your eternal welfare is con-

concerned upon truſt? Do but ſearch diligently, turn over the Bible, conſult the experiences of vviſer men, and ſee whether things be not as I tell you. And hovv doth the matter ſtand novv, poor heart? vvhat muſt the Devil be believed before God? vvhat, is God a hard Maſter ſtill? of all the Creatures in the vvorld, ſome of you have little reaſon to ſay ſo. Haſt thou not been fed, cloathed and delivered a thouſand times by him? Who is it that provided ſo richly for you? Who filled your barns? Who reſtored your health at ſuch and ſuch a time, vvhen the Doctor gave you over? Was that one of his unkindneſſes? Are theſe the things for vvhich you ſlight him? God himſelf makes a challenge in *Jer.* 25. *What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and become vain? neither ſaid they where is the God that brought us out of the land of Egypt, and led us through the wilderneſs, through a land of deſert and pits, through a land of drought, and of the ſhadow of death, where no man dwelt: and I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof, and the goodneſs thereof, and yet you knew not me, ſaith the Lord.* Was there ever ſuch ingratitude heard of? *Paſs ye over the Iſles of Chittim, and ſend unto Kedar, and conſider diligently, and ſee if there be ſuch a thing: hath a nation changed their god? but my people hath changed their glory for that which doth not profit.* And vvhat ſayſt thou, O ungrateful *Iſrael*? have the Heathens more reaſon to cleave to their idols? Are the Pagans more beholding to their ſtocks and ſtones than thou art to the living God? And novv vvhat haſt thou got by all this? haſt thou increaſed thy riches? Are thy barns more full of Corn? Are there ever

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the more Cattel in thy Pastures? Are thy Presses more full of Grapes? Art thou not now grown poor? Is not the Heaven become as Brass, and the Earth as Iron? Do not thy Cattel groan for want of food? Are not thy Vines and Fields grown Barren? Why, you may thank your selves for all this; you did not know when you were well. Return therefore, O back-sliding *Israel*, and thou shalt know the difference between my service, and the sevice of Devils, *Jer.* 2. 30, 31. Let me therefore again plead with thee O God-despising sinner. If for all this thou wilt not be perswaded, let me expostulate the case with thee, as God did with *Israel*. Did not God bring thee into a world every way furnished for thy use? Hath he not subjected the Creatures of the world to thee? Who waters thy Fields out of his treasuries? Who opens the clods of the Earth, and sends thee out of his store-house provisions year by year? What would quickly become of thee, if thou hadst not a fresh supply from him every year, nay, every Moment? O, is this his unkindness for which thou hatest him? And is it for this that thou hast such sower thoughts of him? And if all this were too little, he would do greater things than these; hath he not sent his Son out of his bosom? Doth he not offer thee Heaven and Glory? What canst thou in reason ask, that is good for thee, that he would deny thee, if thou would but be acquainted with him? And if this be an unkind friend, I do not know who is kind: if this be not love, I know not what *is*. What could he have done more to express his love to the world than he hath done? *Isa.* 44. Ask *David* what he thinks of God,

he was well acquainted with him, he dwelt in his houſe, and by his good will would he never out of his more immediate preſence, and company: enquire, I pray, what he found amiſs in him? That you may know his mind the better, he hath left it upon Record in more than one or two places, what a friend he hath had of God, *Pſal.* 16. 6. *The lines are fallen to me in pleaſant places: yea, I have a goodly heritage.* Why, what is that you boaſt of ſo much, O *David?* have not others had Kingdoms as well as you? No, that's not the thing, a Crown is one of the leaſt Jewels in my Cabinet, *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup.* So in *Pſal.* 23. quite through. Nay, doth he not ſometimes come out and beckon to the poor beggarly ſtarved world, to come and eat their fill of the ſame diſh; *O taſte and ſee that the Lord is good,* Pſal. 34 8. If you will give any credit to his word, he will tell you, *No friend like to God,* Pſal. 73. 25, 26, 27, 28. *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none in earth that I can deſire beſides thee. My fleſh and my heart faileth, but God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever. For, lo, they that are far from him ſhall periſh: Thou haſt deſtroyed all them that go a whoring from thee; but it is good for me to draw near to God.* Let others think, or do as they pleaſe, as for him he values *the light of Gods countenance above corn & wine, & oyl, Pſal.* 4. 6, 7. 1 *Joh.* 3. 1. *Cant.* 14. And what ſayſt thou now poor creature? Art thou ſtill of the ſame mind? Wilt thou have *God* for thy *God* and Friend, or no? Is he good and kind, or not? Is his favour worth the deſiring and ſeeking after? *Pſal.* 94. 8. *Underſtand O ye brutiſh among the People, and ye fools when will you be wiſe:*

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If *God* himſelf may not be believed, if *David*'s ſervant may not be credited, hear what one of your brethren, a Heathen I mean, ſaith in this caſe. I ſhall tranſlate his words into Engliſh; they are as follows: *The goodneſs and providence of God to man is ſo great, that if he were well in his wits, he would do nothing publickly or privately, but praiſe God, and ſpeak well of his name*, Ar. Epic. l. 1. c. 16. Doth it not become man, while he is plowing, and digging, and eating, &c. to be ſinging, *Great is that God that hath given us land to till, inſtruments to work with; great is that God who hath given us hands and feet, and other members; above all, that he hath given us an underſtanding ſoul?* And ſeeing moſt men are blind in theſe things, is it not fit that ſome that are more wiſe and able, ſhould publickly praiſe *God* for all theſe things? and now I am a lame old man, but partaker of Reaſon, *God* is to be praiſed by me; this is my work, and this I will do, and I will not leave this ſtation as long as I live; and I wiſh that all the world would joyn with me in ſinging a Song of thankfulneſs to this good *God*. Hear what a teſtimony he gives of the goodneſs of *God*; Hark how he invites you to joyn in that ſweet conſort of ſinging praiſes to your Maker: hark at what a rate he talks, that never read a Bible, or heard of a Chriſt, or knew what this acquaintance with *God* that I am ſpeaking of meant; how bravely doth he ſet out the goodneſs of *God*? What ſay you, will you yet be perſwaded to think well of *God*? Methinks I am loath to ſee my good Maſter thus ſlighted and undervalued; Methinks it grieves me to ſee thee too, ſo fooliſhly to refuſe ſuch an offer. I ſhall conclude what I have to ſay upon

this head, with another notable expreſſion of the ſame divine and God-admiring *Stoick*, *Idem. c. 6. If men would ſtudy the nature of things, and had but grateful minds, they might ſee cauſe ſufficient to praiſe God from every creature in the world.* It is not therefore becauſe God hath no goodneſs or beauty in him, that men do no more earneſtly deſire acquaintance with him; but becauſe their eyes are ſhut, or they look upon him through a wrong proſpective. This is the firſt qualification of this Friend, which may commend his acquaintance to you, that he is the moſt loving and good Friend.

Secondly, He is a moſt comfortable Friend. It is a Vulgar, and yet a dangerous errour, which the Devil would fain keep up the credit of, That a Religious life is a ſad, melancholy, penſive life; and that upon our acquaintance with God, vve muſt bid an everlaſting farevvell to joy, pleaſure, and comforts. And is it true, that a Chriſtians life is ſo uncomfortable a life? What then doth *David* mean to take his Harp ſo oft in his hand? What makes him ſo frequently to vvarble out thoſe melodious Notes? Hovv ſeldom is his Viol out of tune? Why is he ſo oft ſinging and rejoycing? Read the laſt *Pſalms* at your leiſure, and then tell me vvhether that be the language of a ſad mournful Melancholy man? Do you never hear him ſpeak of God his exceeding joy? Doth he not tell God plainly ſometimes, that he can ſcarce reliſh any thing but that vvhich comes from his Table? Nothing elſe can comfort him. Hence it is in *Pſal.* 119. 76, 77. that he puts up this earneſt requeſt to God; *Let I pray thee thy merciful kindneſs be for my comfort.*

As for his part he could take comfort in nothing below that, and that was it that the Lord had graciously promised to feed his servant with, as long as he lived; whereupon he urges God with his promise, *According to thy word unto thy servant.* And that none might think this to be only Gods common kindness that he means, he adds, *Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live,* Gods common mercies would not serve his turn, that was a Dish that the World fed upon as well as he; if he might not have these sweet dainties, peculiar, spiritual, fatherly mercies, he could not live, he should even pine away for hunger. Wherefore he saith a little after, *That his soul did even faint for Gods salvation.* And the soul that hath had a full meal here; O how is it raised? How doth it cry roast meat, *Cant.* 4. 1. *The King hath brought me into his chambers*; and what had you there? nay, that's more than the soul can express; only this she can say, *The taste of that mercy, she hopes to keep in her mouth for ever; she will remember his love more than wine.* Nay, so comfortable a Friend is God, that those who have an interest in him can rejoyce in such times, when others would be weeping and wringing their hands. Gods company is so refreshing, that it turns a prison into a palace; it brings joy and pleasure into a dungeon. Stand forth O ye suffering Saints, and speak your experiences? the world objects your state to us a sad state, and they think you have good reason to accuse God, and if any have any thing to say against the comfortableness of a Religious life, and this friend, it is you. Well then, will you promise, O sinners, to stand to the judgement of the greatest

sufferers?

sufferers. We will enquire of them that have been sawn asunder, tormented, roasted for Gods sake; look into that little *Book of Martyrs*, and you shall find as uncomfortable as their state was, yet they would not accept of deliverance; none of them all that would open his mouth against this Friend for all this. What say you, O *Paul* and *Silas*, now your backs are raw, and your feet are in the stocks? their singing speaks significantly enough for them that they were not over-sad; and they are so busie in crying *Hallelujahs*, that they can't attend to give an answer to so sorry a question. What say the *Martyrs* out of the Flames. Doth not their love burn as hot then as ever? Did ever any of them from *Abel* to the least that suffered in Christs cause, say that *God* was an uncomfortable Friend? Do not all the children of *Wisdom*, from first to last justifie *Wisdom*, and say, *That all her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths, peace?* Of those that have *God* for their Friend and know it, bring me any of them all that complains of God. How doth he come and chear them up when all the world is against them? *Joh.* 16. 33. What made that Holy Man in *Psal.* 23, say, *That though he should walk through the valley of the shadow of death, he would fear no evil.* What, not fear then? Why, what Friend is it that keeps up your spirits? that bears you company in that black and dismal Region; he will soon tell you *God* was with him, and in those slippery ways he lean'd upon his staff, and these were the Cordials that kept his heart from fainting. I challenge all the Gallants in the world out of all their Merry Jovial Clubs, to find such a company of merry chearful

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Creatures as the friends of *God* are. 'Tis not the company of *God*, but the want of it that makes sad. Alas, you know not what their comforts be, and strangers intermeddle not with their joy. You think they can't be merry when their countenance is so grave, but they are sure you can't be truly merry when you smile with a curse upon your souls. They know that he spoke that sentence who could not be mistaken, *Prov.* 14. 13. *Even in Laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that Mirth is heavinesse.* Then call your Roaring, and your Singing, and Laughter, Mirth; but the Spirit of *God* calls it madness, *Eccl.* 2. 2. When a carnal mans heart is ready to die within him, and with *Nabal* to become like a stone; how chearfully then can those look that have God for their friend! Which of the valiant ones of the world can out-face Death, look joyfully into Eternity? Which of them can hug a Faggot, embrace the Flames? This the Saint, can do, and more too; for he can look infinite Justice in the face with a chearful heart, he can hear of Hell with joy and thankfulness, he can think of the day of Judgement with great delight and comfort. I again challenge all the world to produce one out of all their merry Companies, one that can do all this; come muster up all your jovial Blades together; call for your Harps and Viols, add what you will to make the consort compleat; bring in your richest Wines; come lay your heads together, and study what may still add to your comfort; well, is it done? Now come away sinner, this night thy soul must appear before *God*. Well now, what say you man? What, doth your courage fail you? Now call for your merry

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Companions, and let them chear thy heart. Novv call for a Cup, a Whore, never be daunted man; ſhall one of thy courage quail, that could make a mock at the threatnings of the Almighty *God?* vvhat ſo boon and jolly but novv, and novv dovvn in the mouth! Here's a ſudden change indeed? Where's thy merry companions, I ſay again? all fled! Where are thy darling pleaſures? have all forſaken thee? Why ſhouldeſt thou be dejected, there's a poor man in rags that's ſmiling? What, art thou quite bereſt of all comfort? What's the matter man? What's the matter? There's a queſtion vvith all my heart, to ask a man that muſt appear before a *God* to morrovv morning. Well then, it ſeems your heart miſgives you, vvhat then did you mean to talk of joy and pleaſures? are they all come to this? Why, there ſtands one that novv hath his heart as full of comfort as ever it can hold; and the very thoughts of Eternity, vvhich do ſo daunt your ſoul, raiſe his; and vvould you knovv the reaſon? he knovvs he is going to his friend, nay his friend bears him company thorovv that dirty Lane. Behold hovv good and hovv pleaſant a thing it is for *God* and the ſoul to dvvell together in unity! This 'tis to have *God* for a friend. *O bleſſed is the ſoul that is in ſuch a caſe; yea, bleſſed is the ſoul whoſe God is the Lord*, Pſal. 144. 15. Pſal. 69. 15, 16. 2 Cor. 1. 3. Joh. 14. 16. Iſa. 51. 11, 12. Neh. 8. 10. Pſal. 30. 5. Pſal. 44. 4. Prov. 14. 10. Iſa. 29. 19. Rom. 14. 17. 1 Pet. 1. 8. Nay, *David* vvhen he ſeem'd to be ſomevvhat out of tune, leaves this upon Record as undoubted truth, *Pſal.* 73. 1. *That God is good to Iſrael, even to ſuch as are of a clean heart*; Let the Devil and

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his Instruments say what they will to the contrary, I will never believe them; I have said it before, and I see no reason to reverse my sentence; Truly God is good. Though sometimes he may hide his face for a while, yet he doth that in faithfulness, and love; there is kindness in his very scourges, and love bound up in his rods; he is good to *Israel*: do but mark it first or last, *The true Israelite in whom there is no guile, shall be refreshed by this Saviour.* The *Isralite* that wrestles with tears with God, and values his love above the whole world, that will not be put off without his Fathers blessing, he shall have it with a witness; *He shall reap in joy, though he may at present sow in tears. Even to such as are of a clean heart.* The false-hearted hypocrite indeed that gives God only his tongue and lip, cap and knee, but reserves his heart and love for sin and the world, that hath much of complement, but nothing of affection and reality; why, let such a one never expect, while in such a state, to taste those reviving comforts that I have been treating of: while he drives such a trade, he must not expect much of Gods company; but of that hereafter. What a charge doth God give to his Ministers to keep up the spirits of his people. *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people*, saith their God, *speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem.* It's a gross mistake, to think that God loves to see his drooping and hanging down their heads; No, No, he counts it his honour to have his servants chearful. O why then should any of the precious sons and daughters of *Zion* walk up and down, as if their friends company were not sufficient to solace them, even in the lowest state that a child of

God

God can be conceived to be in. While you think *God* is honoured by you, you can't imagine what wrong you do him. The world ſtands by and looks upon you, the Devil bids them look on ſtill, and ask them, how they like ſuch a dumpiſh life, and the ſervice of ſuch a Maſter, all whoſe ſervants and friends lead ſuch a doleful life. Stay, hold there Satan, that's a lye, and a loud one too; there are and have been thouſands of *Gods* Children that have lived, as it were in the Subburbs of Heaven, while they have been upon Earth; many thouſands there have been, that have ſpent their days in true ſolid joy and peace; many that have gone from one Heaven of comfort here, to another of glory and comfort in that other world. As I ſaid before, ſo I ſay again, It is not the company of *God*, but the want of it, makes thoſe ſad which you ſee ſo; beſides, let me tell you, tears and joy are no way inconſiſtent. It may be alſo thoſe tears, that ſad countenance may be for thy ſake; when he ſees what comfort thou deſpiſeſt, and knows what a *God*, what a Friend thou refuſeſt, he can't but weep; it's no Rarity for the people of *God* in the midſt of their ſpiritual enjoyments to pity poor fooliſh ſinners; that ſlight thoſe things which they know to be ſo refreſhing: Thus *David* did when his heart was ſolaced with the love of *God*, when his ſoul was ready to be over-burdened, over-powered with the abundant in-comes of *Gods* kindneſs, he can't but with grief and pity think of their ſtate, who have nothing to live upon but huſks, whileſt he feeds thus high. O let my ſoul be but acquainted with *God*, let me but taſte more of thoſe true comforts, drink of that

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river of pleaſures that is at his right hand, and then I could ſpare theſe lower ſenſual pleaſures, then I ſhould ſcarce envy the moſt merry ranting Blades their comforts; I will not ſay but then I ſhould with ſorrow think of their wants. It was ſpoken by *Galeacius Caraxiola*, one that ſometimes had none of the leaſt ſhares of worldly enjoyments, and might have had more, could he have diſpenſed with the abſence of this friend, could he but have been willing to have wanted thoſe ſpiritual comforts. *Let him periſh that values not one hours communion with God, and the comforts of a divine life, above all the pleaſures and comforts that the earth can afford.* Give me ſuch comforts, ſuch a friend, whoſe ſmiles may refreſh me upon a death-bed, whoſe preſence may revive me when nothing elſe can. *Naturaliſts* tells us of a Bird call'd *Charadius* that being brought into the room where any one lieth ſick, if he look upon the ſick perſon with a fixed eye, he recovereth; but if he turn away his eyes, the perſon dies. It is true, I am ſure, of this friend, in whoſe favour is life, and in whoſe frowns there is death, [*Ar. Epic. l. 3. cap.* 24] *Can you help me to ſuch a friend* (may all ſay with as good reaſon as he) *that can keep me from all fears.* O for ſuch a friend! This is inſtead of all pleaſures to me, to think that God is my Father, and to know that I have loved and obeyed him to the utmoſt of my power, not only in words but in deeds; this, this is the pleaſure, here's a friend indeed. Now what do you ſay to all this, is *God* to be deſired? Is his acquaintance to be ſought after? Can ſuch a friend be too much valued? The truth of it is, I would not give a ruſh for any of your comforts which come

not

hot from a ſenſe of our intereſt in Chriſt, and which have not a ſolid foundation, Scripture-conſolations. It is not he that ſmiles, but he that can look up to God as his, and look into his ſoul, and ſee things there in a good compoſure, and kept in a chearfull ſubjection to his Maker and Redeemer; this, this is the ſtate, here dwells joys, and comforts that deſerve ſuch a name. This lower Region ſometimes is ſtormy, but above there is a conſtant calm. *Sen.* And is God ſtill to be ſlighted? are his favours, is his acquaintance little worth? I know you can't be an enemy to comfort and joys; why, let me tell you here's the Well of Conſolation, here's the Fountain, and all other joys which are drawn out of the Ciſterns will ere long be dry. Come away therefore, poor ſoul, and do not refuſe ſuch joys as all the carnal world can't parallel for their hearts. And this is the next *Motive*, taken from the conſideration of the Nature of this Friend, which I would perſwade you to get acquainted with.

Firſt, He is a loving and kind Friend.

Secondly, He is the moſt chearing, comforting Friend.

Thirdly, He is the moſt able and powerful Friend. He hath all power in his hand; and as long as he is but thy Friend, who ere is thy Foe, thou ſhalt never be over-powred, never be cruſhed. Thou mayſt challenge all the Devils in Hell, and all his inſtruments upon earth to do their worſt, God is on thy ſide, thou needeſt not fear. Thou art in thy ſelf a poor weak Creature, eaſily conquered and broken by a thouſand enemies; but if thou haſt a God to fly to, thou mayeſt

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ſing as well as thoſe did, Iſa. 26. 1. *Thou haſt a ſtrong City, Salvation will God appoint for Walls and Bulwarks.* No wonder then, if every wiſe man think it abundantly vvorth his while to ſecure this great Priviledg to himſelf that God may be his friend; This is his beſt hold, his *One thing neceſſary*, verſe 4. One thing have I deſired of the Lord, that vvill I ſeek after; that I may dwell in the houſe of God all the dayes of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his Temple.

Sin, the World, and the Devil, may tempt a ſinner, but they can never guard him from the power of this Great and Almighty God.

And now, you that are contented to live as vvithout God in the World, let me requeſt you to conſider:

Canſt thou ſpread out the Heavens as a Curtain, or cover the Sun vvith Darkneſs? Canſt thou call to the Lightnings, and vvill they anſwer thee, and ſay, Here vve are? Shouldſt thou ſpeak to that haſty Champion, and command him to ſtand ſtill one Quarter of an Hour, vvould he obey thee? If theſe things be too much, vvhy doſt thou boaſt, that art but a Worm? Alas poor ſinner, vvhen this great God appears in judgment, thou art not able to deal vvith a Fly or a Frog.

O then, Is it not good prudence for all the ſons of men, to come and agree quickly vvith this Adverſary vvhile he is in the vvay, for *vvhoever* goes on in an Enmity and Rebellion againſt this Lord of Heaven and Earth, ſhall not proſper, but be ſure his Sin ſhall find him out.

And this is another qualification of this Friend vvhich I vvould commend to your acquaintance, he is an able Friend.

First, he is the moſt kind and loving Friend.
Secondly, he is the moſt comfortable Friend.
Thirdly, he is the moſt able and powerful Friend.

Fourthly, he is the moſt active Friend: He commands his to be diligent and induſtrious, always abounding in the vvork of the Lord, ſurely he vvill not be ſlovv.

If the inanimate creature, ſuch as the Sun, reſolveth as a ſtrong man to run his Race; hovv active then muſt the maker of that Sun be; if he command you not to deal vvith a ſlack hand, ſurely he himſelf vvill not deal vvith a ſlack hand; ſhould you behold this Friend of yours riding upon the vvings of the Wind, and making the cloud his Chariot, vvould you not ſay, O hovv ſwift, O hovv active in this glorious Friend of mine! The feet of this beloved One are as Hinds feet, for the good of his Friends. Yea, *his very eyes run to and fro through the whole world*; for their good he keeps conſtant vvatch and vvard about them, and he that can injure any of his out of his ſight ſhall go unpuniſhed, *Eſa.* 27. 3.

The Lord ſpeaks this under the Metaphor of a *Vine-Yard*, and doth this great Husbandman neglect his *Vine-Yard?* doth he not Dig, Manure and ſtone it, and keep out the *wilde* Boar, and Foxes? Doth he not prune it, and tender it charily? I the Lord do keep it night and day, none ſhall come into it to gather the Fruit of it vvithout my leave. I vvill water it every moment: So that you ſee what pains God takes for his. Do you believe, this Friend ſits in Heaven, and looks down upon the Earth for nothing? Be not deceived, O ſinner, that wilt not be perſwaded to get

get reconciliation with this Great and Holy Majesty. *The Lord is not slack concerning his coming, as some account slackness:* Let his stay be never so long, when he comes to judg the world, it will be before the Sinner looks for him. Indeed there is nothing that a *wicked man* more pleaseth himself with, than the thoughts that it will be a long time before *God*, and he meet, but he little considers that *a Thousand years are but as One day* compared to the dayes of Eternity. Now, by faith, these things are made real to the considerate Christian; and as for the supplying of his wants, he knows if he comes at midnight to borrow bread of him, he will not put you off with this excuse, that he is a Bed and cannot rise from his Children, but will presently help, making their necessity his own opportunity to give them what shall be convenient for them; as knowing, that let the wind sit in what corner it will, it shall fit their Sails, and bring them nearer the Harbour.

The worlds Friends, are infinitely below this Friend; One hath chosen Silver and Gold, and a great Estate, and such a one in the worlds Kalender may be writ down for one of the wisest in his Choice: Well, let us see now what this Friend can do for you, your body is on the Rack, your hands are weak, your legs tremble, your stomach fails, your sleep departs from you; Where is now your friend? Call for him speedily, come let us now see if he be a friend indeed, let us see it, can he give you one hours sleep, can he help you to one moments rest, can he give you no refreshment, no help? Take him, lay him by you on your Bed. O its so heavy I cannot endure it: Lay it in

your Bosome; O, I cannot breath for it; take it away, take it away, it will not do: Why Sir, do you know what you say? It is your old Friend which you valued above God himself; it is a bag of Gold: I know it, I know it, it presses me down; it is so heavy I cannot bear it; away with it, away with it: And is this the Friend you prized so very highly? Is this all the kindness that he hath for you now? Is this all the help he can give you at such a time, when a Friend should stand one in some stead? Were you not told as much long ago, how you should be served at last?

Fifthly, He is the most Humble and Condescending Friend; He doth not scorn to be acquainted with the Meanest; The Beggar may be as welcome to Him, as the Prince: The Poor and Rich are all one to Him; He takes as much notice of *Job* on the Dunghill, as *David* on the Throne: He knows any of his Friends in Raggs, as well as in Silks; in Sheep-skins and Goat-skins, as well as in Scarlet and fine Linnen.

Look up poor Creature, and see what a Priviledge thou hast; God Himself, the King of Glory, is willing to be Acquainted with thee: What sayest thou to this? Doth not thy Heart leap within *thee for Joy, when you consider the* infinite Goodness of God, *that Reveals* these things to *Babes, which are hid from the Wise and Prudent: Even so Father, for it hath seem'd good in thy Eyes.* That's a strong Expression; yet he spoke it that cannot Lye: Therefore, O you Humble Ones, that value the Favour of this Friend, Hear and Read it, and make the Best of it: It's Yours; feed upon it: It's a sweet

ſweet bit indeed; *Iſa.* 66. 1, 2. *Thus ſaith the Lord, Heaven is my Throne, and Earth is my foot-ſtool; where is the houſe that ye will build me, and where is the place of my Reſt? For all theſe things hath mine hand made, and all theſe things have been, ſaith the Lord: But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite Spirit, and trembleth at my Word.* I ſhall have occaſion hereafter, a little to open theſe words under another *Head*, wherefore I ſhall now but name it. O what encouragement is here for the moſt deſpicable Creature in the world, that may be as happy in the acquaintance with God, as the mightieſt Lord in the World. Here's one that will not be aſhamed to own thee, when others will take little notice of thee. Thou thinkeſt theſe things ſtrange, it may be, and ſo they be indeed, but yet not more ſtrange than true. It doth not a little engage the affections of the meaneſt Rank, if a perſon of quality do but give them a kind look; eſpecially if they may have freedom of acceſs to Him. O what a Priviledge they count it; but ſuch a one to undertake the whole managing of a poor mans affairs, for him to come to his Houſe, and to look into his Cupboard, and to take care of ſupplying all his Wants, and coming frequently to him, and ſupping with him, and be with him, and to make great Proviſion for him as if he vvere a Prince; where is ſuch a thing as this heard of? But if ſuch a thing vvere, it were a light matter in compariſon of vvhat I am ſpeaking: VVhere do we ever Read of a great Kings ſending Embaſſador after Embaſſador to a poor Beggar? What Hiſtory doth Record ſuch a Story as this, that a great Monarch ſhould make earneſt ſute for many

years together to a worthleſs ſlave, that he can hang when he will, that hath not a rag to her back, to make her his Queen; this is rare indeed, this is beyond preſident among men; but yet it is that which the great God doth not diſdain to do; Nay let me tell thee whoſoever thou art remaining in a ſtate of Nature, that readeſt theſe lines, that at this very time God is doing no leſs then all this comes to for thee; and I in the name of my great Maſter do come to expoſtulate the caſe with thee; that God that gave thee thy breath, and can take it away as ſoon as he pleaſeth; that God that made Heaven and Earth, to whom all the Nations of the Earth are but as the drop of a bucket to the vaſt Ocean, who holdeſt the Sea in the hollow of his hands, that weigheth the mountains in ſcales, and the hills in a ballance: that God that hath no leſs than a Heaven to reward with, and a Hell and everlaſting Flames to puniſh with, he it is, that doth by me beſeech thee to be reconciled unto him, he it is that would be your Friend, your Acquaintance. O unheard of mercy! O infinite and unparallel'd condeſcention! I have oft thought there are two great aſtoniſhing wonders in the world, The one is Gods infinite mercy and condeſcention to rebellious apoſtatized man; and the other is mans inſenſibility and ingratitude; that there needs ſuch a ſtir, and ſo many words to perſwade him to cloſe with this wonder of kindneſs, and that ſo very few ſhould be prevailed with. See this ſet forth to the life in *Ezek.* 16. *Iſa.* 1. 2, 3. *Pſal.* 11. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. *The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the Heavens. Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth him-*

himself to behold the things that are in Heaven, and the things that are in the Earth: He raiseth up the poor out of the Dust, and lifted the needy out of the Dung-hil, that he may sit with Princes, &c. The *Psalmist* therefore had no small reason to cry out with admiration, Psal. 8. 4. *What is man that thou art mindful of him; and the son of man, that thou visiteſt him? What is man that thou takeſt knowledg of him, or the son of man, that thou makeſt account of him?* Psal. 144. 3. Job 17. 17, 18. *What is man that thou ſhouldeſt magnifie him, and that thou ſhouldeſt ſet thy heart upon him, and that thou ſhouldeſt viſit him every Morning, and try him every moment?* Behold his Majeſty, and yet how he ſtoops? Nahum 1. 4. Psal. 18. Job 37. 38, and 39. Chapters, Iſa. 40. Psal. 138. 6. *Though the Lord be high, yet hath he reſpect unto the lowly: But the proud he knows afar off.* That which (*Seneca, Epiſt.* 17.) the Moraliſt ſpeaks of Wiſdom may be ſaid of God, *Epiſt.* 61. *It is lawful to come to him without rich Attire and great attendance, come naked and you ſhall be as kindly entertained, as if you did ſhine in cloth of Gold, and were beſparkled with Diamonds. He will not give freer acceſs to the rich than the poor, neither doth he value a ſtrong healthful perſon, before a ſick and crazy one, a beautiful and well-trim'd Gallant, before a cankered, old, deformed Creature.* Thus far *Seneca* and the Scripture ſpeaks of the Language. Neither *Job's* Boyls, nor *Lazarus's* ſores made God keep ever the further off from them. I knew one all of a cleave with the ſmall Pox, whom this friend came to viſit, and in that condition, how many kiſſes had that ſweet Creature from God? O it would do ones heart good to have ſuch a friend! And this

is the next qualification of this Friend, which may commend him to thy acquaintance, be thou never ſo poor, never ſo vile and ſinful in thy own eyes, ſuch as thy ſelf he hath made welcome; and upon his Word, wilt thou but come away ſpeedily, thou ſhalt be welcome too.

Sixthly, He is the moſt Faithful friend. Where is the man that can tax him of the leaſt unfaithfulneſs? which is the man that can ſay that he ever forſook any of his in their greateſt exigency? he hath been truſted more than once with more than the world is worth a thouſand times over; and they which truſted him moſt, never accuſeth, never thought their choiſeſt Jewels, their whole eſtate could be left in ſafer hands; his promiſe, and his performance have kept touch, he never failed his in the leaſt punctilio, or circumſtance of time. Ask *Abraham*, who was one of Gods friends, God tells him that his ſeed ſhall inherit *Canaan*, and that they ſhall be ſtrangers in a Land that was not theirs four hundred years; and did he not at the expiring of that time, though it was at midnight almoſt, bring them out of *Egypt*: God keeps his time with them to a minute. Ask *Joſhua* whether he did not live to ſee this promiſe made good? inquire of *David*, and he will tell you again, that no friend is ſo truſty. The unfaithfulneſs is on mans ſide, there indeed, there I ſay is many an unhandſome thing done, and yet for all God doth not (as you ſhall here hereafter) preſently break with them; if they forget that they are Children, he will not forget that he is their Father; if God ſhould have done thus by them, many thouſands of them that are now in Glory had been ſomewhere elſe. He promiſeth indeed

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great things unto his Friend; but do's he not do as he ſaith, if not in the very thing, yet in that which is better; and who would account himſelf wronged, if one that promiſed him ten pound in Silver, ſhould in the ſtead of it give him ten thouſand Pound in Gold and Jewels; I believe ſuch a one would not be thought to be worſe than his word, nor the perſon to whom he made this promiſe, count himſelf injured. And this God doth frequently, did men but underſtand the worth of what God pays them with. It may be God doth not cloath them in Silks and Sattins, (neither do I know that he ever promiſed to do ſo) but yet he Cloaths them with the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and beſtowes thoſe Glorious Robes upon them, in which they look more Trim and Neat than in Cloaths of Gold; he hath made him ſuch a Sute that is the handſomer for the much wearing; he may Eat and Drink, Sleep and Work in it, and keep it on his Back Day and Night, and it ſhall not be wrinkled; it is the better for uſe: He is a faithful Friend, and none that ever had to do with Him can ſay any thing to the contrary; He never forgot any Buſineſs that any of his Friends deſired him to do for them, he never neglected it, or did it by the halves; where did any of them come to him to reveal ſome ſecret loathſome diſtemper to him, that he reproached them with it? To which of them did he promiſe a Heaven, and put them off with this World: When this Pilot undertakes to Steer their Courſe, there their Veſſel ſhall never ſplit upon the Rock, run upon the Sands, or ſpring a Leak, ſo as to ſink in the Seas; to be ſure He will ſee them ſafe in their Harbour. *Ar. Epiſt. l. c.* 26. He was no Chriſtian, yet I ſuppoſe none will

deny but he ſpake good Divinity; vvho ſaid, *If a Man will chooſe God for his Friend, he ſhall travel ſecurely through a Wilderneſs that hath many Beaſts of prey in it, he ſhall paſs ſafely through this World; for he only is ſafe that hath God for his guide.* Doth he not ſpeak a little like *David* himſelf, *Pſal.* 37. 26. Who never expected to come to Glory, except he vvere guided by his Council! Novv, if a poor Heathen could ſay thus, and ſee good reaſon to truſt God, and admire his Faithfulneſs as he doth frequently; and ſo doth *Seneca*, juſtifying Gods Faithfulneſs in all his dealings with the beſt men in all their Sufferings, and the proſperity of the vvicked; vvhat then ſhall the heavenly Chriſtian ſay, vvho hath experienced ſo much of Gods Faithfulneſs in anſvvering his Prayers, in fulfilling his promiſes, and ſupplying all his exigencies. *David* vvill tell you as much, and juſtifie God in his moſt ſevere diſpenſations tovvards him: *In very Faithfulneſs haſt thou afflicted me, Pſal.* 119. 75. In our earthly and bodily affairs, vve ſhould never count that Phyſitian faithful that vvill rather open a vein, or put his Patient to exquiſite torture to ſave his Life, then let him die eaſily. We believe a Father may vvhip his ſtubborn Child vvith more love than let him alone. To prevent the Ax or Halter vvith a Rod, is no cruelty. Faithful are the vvounds of a Friend, *Prov.* 2. 7, 6. It vvas not for nothing that the Pſalmiſt ſticks ſo cloſe to God, he had a little experience of the unfaithfulneſs of other friends, *Pſal.* 38. 9, 11. *His Lovers and his Friends ſtood aloof from his ſores, and his Kinſman ſtood afar off.* May not a great many complain as well as *Job*, *That their Brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the ſtream of Brooks they paſs*

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away, Job 6. 15. A friend may forget one, a brother may disown one, Father and Mother may cast one off, but here's a Friend that sticks closer than all. Nay, He is a better Friend to his than they are to themselves, when they love themselves so little as to undo themselves, he loved them so well as to save them; when they loved themselves, so as to Poison themselves; he loved them, so as to give them a powerful Antidote; when they like Children would have the Knife, he takes it out of their hands lest they should cut their Fingers; when they are so careless as to surfit themselves, he is so faithful as to keep them short, and diet them; and all this I hope they that understand themselves will not call unkindness or infidelity. *David* had in his time some Friends that made no bones of hazarding their lives for him; some of them were willing to quench his Thirst though with their Blood, and yet for all that in all his life he never met with so faithful a Friend as his God, *Psal.* 89. 8. *O Lord God of Hosts, who is a strong God like unto thee, or to thy faithfulness round about thee?* He had rather trust his God than any of them all. God is a real true faithful Friend; he tells us things as they be; he doth not speak of more things than the nature of them doth require; he doth not tell the best, and hide the worst; he doth not speak all of Heaven, and nothing of suffering, but saith plainly, all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, they must suffer persecution: And Christ saith, Those that will be his Disciples, must take up their Cross and follow him, and that through many Tribulations, they must enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; He speaks of sowing in Tears, as well as reaping in joy; of

fliction as well as Glory. And when he ſpeaks of the Glory of another world, he doth not too highly advance his Excellency. When he ſpeaks of his Wrath, or Hell, or Sin, he doth not make them greater evils than they be. The Lord is faithful in all his dealings, and that they which love him, know right well. Whatſoever doth happen to the world doth happen juſtly and faithfully; and ſo if thou wilt but well obſerve, thou ſhalt find. And what ſaieſt thou after all this, thou who haſt tryed many and many a friend, ſo called, and haſt by ſad experience firſt or laſt found them all unfaithful, and art almoſt ready to ſay of all men, that they are Lyars, and that truth and reality are rarities; thou thinkeſt there is ſcarce a man upon the Earth to be truſted? And wilt thou never be affraid of ſuch a friend? wilt thou at laſt be wiſe, and be acquainted with a friend that never proved unfaithful? Behold ſuch a one that would be glad with all his heart to entertaine you, would you but forſake your old treacherous Acquaintance. Here, here's one that never fails, nor forſakes thoſe that put their truſt in him. The Heavens ſhall depart, & the Hills be removed out of their places, but his faithfulneſs, his love ſhall never depart from his; and wilt thou not think ſuch a friend after all this worth the having? Come, come, never ſtand fretting thy heart out with diſcontents, men will be men, that is, unfaithful as long as the world laſts. Do you expect as long as ſin reigns in mens ſouls, that as long as Satan doth ſo much act therein, that they ſhould forget to be ſelfiſh, covetous, deceitful? but now God will always be like himſelf a God, faithful, true, holy, juſt: and if

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any one in Heaven, or in Earth can condemn God justly, of the least unfaithfulness, my mouth shall soon be stopped. In this thing I confess my self to be of *Antoninus* his mind, who said, *That if there be a God as there is most certainly, why that God must necessarily be most faithful, most wise, most good; but if there be no God, it is not worth the while to live in a world, in which there is nothing but sin, confusion, disorder, and no hopes of a redress; the excellence of our being, our Reason, would make our misery more exquisite, and our lives less desirable.* But blessed be God it is not come to that pass, that we should need question the being of a God; for as one saith wisely, *Thou hast far more reason to question thy own being then Gods.* Now I say again, methinks he that hath been so oft perplexed with many unfaithful, unworthy carriages from them which he called friends, should be at last perswaded to try what this one friend would do for him. O what abundance of sorrow would it prevent, if men would but trust God more, and men less. This, this is the friend, sick and well, rich and poor, living and dying, always the same. Make sure of this Friend, and thou art safe; thy All is then in safe and faithful hands.

Seventhly, He is a rich Friend, *the earth is the Lords, and the Fulness thereof; cattel upon a thousand hills is his.* He it is that hath the absolute disposal of Crowns and Scepters, he it is that can easily raise all his Favourites to a high estate; if the world and all its glory can do his any good, if Kingdoms and vast Dominions can advantage them, he can with better reason than he did to Christ, say, All this is mine, and if thou wilt love me and worship me, I will give you as much of

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it as will do thee good; and who would account it a kindneſs to be given that which will do one hurt? but theſe are but Toys and Trifles in compariſon of what God hath to beſtow upon his Friends. Lift up thine eyes, and behold thoſe gliſtering Stars; look upon that ſtately Canopy that hangs over thy Head; why, all this is nothing almoſt to the Glory which ſhall be revealed; there is a far greater diſproportion between what we ſee and enjoy at the beſt here below, than there is between the Foot-ſtool and the Crown. O could you but by Faith draw the Curtain and ſee vvhat is vvithin; O did you but know vvhat's behind thoſe Hangings vvhich you ſee vvrote ſo curiouſly, the Work of his Fingers! O that that's the Place, there's a Houſe indeed, there's a Palace, couldſt thou but by Faith and Meditation take a view of it; could you but make a Voyage into that far Country, and ſee that City of God, and Diſcourſe vvith the Inhabitants of the *New Jeruſalem*; vvhat Diſcoveries ſhould you then have of the Riches, State, and Granduer of that Princes Court; ſhouldſt thou but ſee thoſe Treaſuries opened, and know the vvorth of Gods Jewels, thou vvouldſt vvonder vvhat Men and Women meant, that they ſhould need ſo much perſvvading to be Acquainted vvith him that had ſuch things to beſtow; you vvould judge him vvorſe than mad, vvho ſhould not joyfully embrace any Overtures of this Nature; in a vvord, they would reckon that perſon beſotted that ſhould not vvith all poſſible Gratitude, cloſe vvith ſuch kind of propoſals. Come along therefore vvith me, poor ſoul, thou that art not vvorth a Groat, and haſt never a Friend that can or vvill give you any thing to ſpeak

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of, come along with me, and take a short prospect of the Territories of this mighty Monarch, let's get up to Mount *Pisgah*, and make a Survey of that goodly Land, let's take a turn or two in the Courts of his Palace; consider well the pleasantness of this Seat, how rarely it is Accommodated, the Richness of the Furniture, the Nobleness of the Inhabitants, the Sweetness of that Harmony that sounds Night and Day in that Temple, the unconceivable Costliness, Riches, Glory, and Excellency of every thing. Do but look a little about thee, are not thine Eyes even dazelled at the sight? Do you see what Building that is, whose Walls are Jasper, and the City is all of pure Gold, like unto clear Glass, and the Foundation of the Walls of that City are Garnished with all manner of precious Stones, *Rev.* 21. &c. And what think you now, where is the Prince upon Earth that ever was master of such an Estate? What are his Attendants? the meanest of those that stand in his Presence, is no less than a King; the least of his Servants is more Rich and Glorious than the Mightiest Potentate that ever trode upon earthly Mold, that was a stranger to God. This God doth not grudg to give that which is more worth than a thousand Kingdoms to his Darlings. I might tell also at what a rate they live, who are fed always at his Table, and what dainty Dishes they Feed upon, I might speak of their Clothing and Robes, all which speak the Riches of that Lord which maintains his servants so highly. But what am I doing, *Can I Grasp the Heavens in my Arms? or take up the Sea in the hollow of my Hands? Can I measure the Heaven of Heavens, or weigh the Mountains in scales, or the hills in a ballance?* Could I do all

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and a thouſand times more, yet could not give you Account of the Eſtate of him who would be your Friend, your Husband: at the beſt, I can but give you a ſuperficial groſs Relation of it, and when I have ſaid all that I can ſpeak of, and all the men in the world with all their Tongues have ſpoke what they can too, nay, let Angels with their Heavenly Rhetorick do what they can to ſet out the Glory of his Kingdom; I ſay, when all this is done, you muſt remember all falls ſhort of what it is, and that ſince the beginning of the World men have not heard, neither can it enter into the Heart of Man, to conceive what a God is Worth, what a Friend you may have of Him, if you will but ſpeedily be Acquainted with Him. His Kingdom hath no Bounds, and his Dominions Reach further than both the *Indies*. The ſmall Love-tokens that he ſends now and then to his Beloved into a far Countrey, are of infinitely more Value than all the Lockets of Diamonds and Richeſt Pearles and Jewels in the World; *Prov.* 8. Behold how merrily *Rebeccah* looks upon a ſorry Jewel or two preſented by *Eliezer* from his Maſter, how ſoon is her Heart Conquered? and why ſhould we not be more taken with things of far greater Worth? What is all this, as much as nothing with you? Methinks your hearts ſhould be all on a Fire; Methinks you ſhould quickly ſay, O that I could but ſee Him! Who will bring me Acquainted with him, he ſhall have my heart, my deareſt Love? Methinks, ſhould I ask you the ſame queſtion that they did *Rebeccah*, Wilt thou go a long with me to ſuch a Friend? You ſhould readily, without any further diſpute ſay, yea, with all my Heart, and think long to be up and

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going. Why then do you talk of a year, a month longer? O what ail poor Creatures to make us ſtand waiting ſo long for an anſwer? Do you ever expect a better offer? Do you look to advance your ſelves ſomewhere elſe? Can you hope for a better, a richer match? Go then and ſearch out among all thy Lovers which make ſuit to thee, which of them can feed thee with ſuch coſtly viands, which of them can cloath you in ſuch Royal Apparel? Which of them can make you ſuch a Joynture? Conſider wiſely and ſpeedily, that I may turn to the right hand or the left. What, ſaith thou, canſt thou amongſt them all, better thy ſelf? Is there any one like him? Is there any of the Sons of the mighty comparable to him? Are any of the Kings, or great ones of the Earth able to make you ſuch an offer; or ſhould they, can any of them make it good? What, have you yet reſolved upon the point or not? What it is you ſtand for, I pray do you queſtion the Truth of what I ſpeak? Do you make account I ſpeak of the higheſt, and make the beſt of things? Why, then let me tell you further, I have not, I cannot tell you the half of what you will find to be true, if you would come to be throughly reſolved, or of what you will believe hereafter, to your ſorrow, if you ſtill refuſe him. And I muſt further add to what I ſaid before, that whatever riches God poſſeſſes, he will Joynture you in, as ſoon as you ſhall in good earneſt be willing to accept him for your Friend; all that I can ſpeak of, and more too, you may call your own. Ask, and it ſhall be given without preſcribing how much more than you can ask or think ſhall be given you. Your Lord and husband

husband is not ſo niggardly as *Ahaſhuerus*, who ſaid, *What is thy requeſt, and what is thy Petition, Queen Eſther, and it ſhall be given thee, to the half of my Kingdom?* But God ſaith what is thy requeſt, and what is thy petition poor ſoul, and it ſhall be granted to the whole of my Kingdom; what is it thou wanteſt, what attendants doſt thou lack to wait upon thee to my Court? are they Prophets, Apoſtles, Miniſters, Angels, they ſhall be given, 1 *Cor.* 3. 21. Do but try him; he bids you ask, and you ſhall have: Let me give you this one *Memento*, Ask like one that hath to do with a rich King, who hates to do any thing below himſelf; remember it is he that delights to give like a God; widen therefore thy deſires as large as Heaven, be bold and ſpeak a great word, and I warrant thee thou ſhalt not be denied; tell God, that ſeeing in his infinite goodneſs and condeſcention, he hath been pleaſed to give thee leave to ask without reſtraint, thou doſt humbly requeſt his Son for thy Lord and Husband, himſelf for thy Father, God, and Friend, his Kingdom for thy Dowry, the Righteouſneſs of his Son for thy Ornament, Cloathing, and Beauty, the comforts of his Spirit, and abundance of his grace to bear thy charges handſomly, till thou comeſt to his houſe. This is high indeed! but thy great and noble Lord loves dearly to hear ſuch covetous Petitioners, who will be put off with nothing but ſuch great things. When do any of theſe go ſad from his Court? when do any of the ſeed of *Jacob* ſeek his face in vain? This, this is the generation of thriving ones, who ſeek for life, immortality and glory; who ſeek thy face, O God of *Jacob*. And now what do you ſay, will

will you believe all this? Dare you take my word? I am perſwaded none of you all think I dare tell you a lye, and do you any wrong; but for all that, I do not deſire you ſhould take my word, nor the word of any man living in a thing that concerns Eternity; but take his word who cannot lye, *Pſal.* 8. 18. *Riches and Honour are with me; yea durable Riches and Righteouſneſs*, verſ. 19. *My fruit is better than Gold; yea, than fine Gold; and my Revenue then choice Silver.* The wiſe man tells us, *That wealth makes many friends*, Prov. 19. 4. *And that many will intreat the favour of the Prince; and that every one is a Friend to him that gives Gifts.* If this might be in Spirituals, I ſhould not fear, but that I ſhould prevail with all my hearers to ſeek the friendſhip of God; if their real intereſt did weigh with them, if true riches and wealth could win their affections, if the moſt ſubſtantial good things might ſignifie any thing, if ſolid reaſons might byaſs them, I ſhould not fear going away without them. But alas, alas, how little power have all theſe things with the ſenſual world? What are men and women turn'd to? What ſots and bruits are they in the concerns of their ſouls, and the affairs of that other world? Men run up and down hunting after good things, and have taken a falſe ſeat, they hope to catch that at laſt which they will feed upon, and ſatisfie themſelves with. I tell thee, O man who askeſt, who will ſhew us any good? Here here it is: riches thou meaneſt: well then, let it be ſo; and if I do not prove that what I offer thee from my great Maſter, to be a thouſand times more worth thy ſeeking than Gold or Silver, and better Coin than that which bore *Ceſar's* ſtamp

ſtamp upon it, then ſay you were cheated. Thou telleſt over thy moneys very faſt methinks, but are you ſure all that is Gold which doth ſo gliſter? Is all that currant Silver? VVill it go in another Country? Is it not poſſible, but that you may be miſtaken. Here, here is the Gold that is tried, it vvill go any vvhere; here is one that will give you, will you but deſire earneſtly his Acquaintance, ſuch Treaſure that will not periſh, ſuch Silver that hath not Tin, ſuch Gold which hath no Droſs, ſuch true Riches that can't be taken away from you. Ask that Saint which looks ſo merrily, that lives ſo bravely, how he got his Eſtate, and how he came to be ſo Rich all of a ſudden; he will ſoon tell you how, and where his Treaſure lies, and yet not fear being Robbed. He hath of late been Acquainted with a Friend that hath given him that which makes him eſteem, himſelf more worth than if he were poſſeſt of ten times more than ever *Alexander* or *Cæſar* was. A Friend of *Cyrus* in *Xeniphon* being asked where his Treaſure was, which made him to think ſo highly of himſelf? His anſwer was, *Where* Cyrus *his friend was.* A Chriſtian may with much better reaſon and chearfulneſs, if asked, where his Riches and Eſtate lies, anſwer, *Where God his Friend is.* Ask the pooreſt of them that are Accquainted with God, the weakeſt of all his Children, what they will ſell their Portion for, and what you ſhall give them for to reſign up all their intereſt in God, to quit their claim to this Inheritance: Would they not all be of *Pauls* mind, and even ſcorn the motion, and count the glory of a thouſand worlds, but as dung and droſs in compariſon of the excellency of the know-

knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord, *Phil.* 3. 8. Nay, hear what one says that was far less acquainted with God then any of them which I have been speaking of, when he talks of such a kind of bargain as this. (*Epict.*) *Offer me a Kingdom, and you offer me to my loss.* For, saith the same Author in another place, *A good man may look up to Heaven, as the seat of his Friend, and not fear want.* Inquire of *David* what portion God gave him? and he will soon answer you. A goodly portion indeed; and that he gave him no less then himself, and that the lines are fallen to him in pleasant places, and that he hath a goodly heritage, *Psal.* 16. And therefore he counts himself richer then if he had all his Enemies in chains, and their Royalties at his disposal; he takes himself to be afar happier man then if he were absolute Monarch of the Universe, and were to give Laws to the inferiour World; he reckons himself now as well to pass and better too then *Adam,* when he was sole Landlord of the World. It was true spoken of some body, I do well remember who. *He that hath rich Friends, must not look upon himself as poor.* O then that you would be indeed friends to your selves, and have respect to your own real interests! And what, will not this mighty and powerful Argument, which weighs as much as a thousand others, prevail? And do you still say, what profit will there be in serving the Lord, and what advantage shall I get if I be acquainted with him? To what account will it return? I again answer, To a very good account every way. Try but this trade with the wise Merchant, & you shall soon feel the benefit of it. (*Bolton*) *Conceive to thy self mountains of Gold and rocks of Dia-*

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monds, & to this a vaſt unmeaſurable tract of ground land of inheritance, the moſt fertile ſoil in the world bringing in ſuch a burden every year that ſhall trouble the owner to reap it; imagine his Paſture as great as his Arable, and all cloathed with thouſands of Cattel ſmall and great, and none of them barren neither; ſuppoſe his Barns and Store-houſes could never be emptied, and his Preſſes ſhould burſt out every year with new Wine. Again, *let the Merchant ſtore his Cellars with the moſt pure Oyl, and furniſh him with ſuch rich Spices as the Queen of* Sheba *brought to* Solomon; *ſuppoſe he were provided with all the exquiſite Rarities that the Air, Sea, or Earth can afford, yet for all this he were a beggar, in compariſon of one that hath God for his Friend: Such a one poſſeſſeth him that poſſeſſeth all things.* Well then, be perſvvaded at laſt to be vviſe. I remember the Moraliſt (*Sen. Epiſt.* 6.) brings in one acting like a vviſe man, and a good proficient in Philoſophy, vvho begins to be a friend to himſelf. And this is that that I am pleading vvith you for. If I came to rob you of all hopes of happineſs, and to give avvay all that you have or expect, and to turn Mendicants; if I come to perſvvade you to eſpouſe a beggarly intereſt, and to match your ſelf ſo as that you ſhould be ſure to be undone, I ſhould not vvonder, if after I had ſpoke much, I ſhould prevail but little. But vvhen it is ſuch a Cauſe that I am pleading, vvhen it is for your ovvn unſpeakable advantage, vvhen it is riches, true riches that I vvould have you look after, an eſtate that I vvould have you mind, vvhich may be had for the looking after, have I not cauſe to admire vvhat need a man ſhould have to uſe ſo many vvords? Had you money to ſpare, and could I tell you of a brave purchaſe

chaſe that you might have an excellent penny-vvorth, I am perſvvaded I ſhould not be very unvvelcome. Could I tell you of a vaſt Eſtate that you might have, upon the matter, for accepting or looking after, I believe I need not ſpend ten years in earneſt begging and intreating you to look after ſuch a thing. Should I offer to bring you to the place and perſon of vvhom you might buy it, ſhould I not ſoon have your company? ſhould not your neceſſaries be quickly made ready for ſuch a journey? vvould you not be up betimes in the morning? nay, vvould you not travel all night, and think it no folly nor madneſs, both to loſe ſome reſt, and to take ſome pains, ſo you might but come to poſſeſs vvhat I ſpeak of. Nay, vvere there but a poſſibility of obtaining of it, at leaſt a probability, I perſvvade my ſelf you vvould not fail to look after it the very firſt thing you did. I am ready to think you vvould neither ſpare for pains or coſts, ſo that after all you might but make ſure of enjoying it. Why, vvhat then is the matter that I can do no more in the buſineſs that I am about? I am ſure I bring you tidings of a better bargain, a braver purchaſe, and ſurer inheritance, and vvhat need I then ſpend ſo much time in arguing vvith you? Good Lord! vvhat mean people? Are they out of their vvits, and quite beſide themſelves? What, is a Feather better then a Crovvn, Braſs than Gold? Is a Glaſs to be preferred before a Diamond, finite Enjoyments before everlaſting Riches, Darkneſs before Light, the World before God? O hovv is man ſunk belovv himſelf? What, hath ſin made men and vvomen? If this be not folly and madneſs, vvhat is? Such may go for vviſe men in the vvorlds

account that makes such choices; and it's possible a man in *Bedlam* may say his neighbour that tore all his hair off from his head, is well in his wits. O that this were not the condition of the far greater part of the world. And vvhat meanest thou, O my soul, that thou art no more affected to see such vast multitudes of brain-sick frantick sinners, that make light of the tender of the Gospel, that take them for their enemies, vvho vvould do their utmost to make them happy for ever. I must profess I am even ashamed of my ovvn heart, that I do not mingle my vvords vvith tears; that I should speak for God and souls, vvith so indifferent a spirit! Well, novv you have heard of a great Match by which you may be made for ever; are you for all this of the same mind you vvere: Well then, complain not if you be a beggar. Remember hovv you vvere offered, remember you might have been vvorth more then a vvorld. O that inconsiderate souls did but knovv; and indeed knovv vvhat an offer this is! O that they vvould not carelesly undervalue such a proposal! O vvhat shall I do? Hovv shall I persvvade you? What Arguments vvill prevail? O thou great and mighty God, give men and vvomen but a spiritual understanding of these things, make them deeply apprehensive of their excellency and reality, and then I should soon have them vvith thankfulness complying vvith these tenders vvhich thou commandest me to make unto them. O vvhen shall it once be! Hovv long shall the Devil, and an unbelieving heart undo so many Millions? Hovv long shall Satan triumph over souls, and cheat them thus miserably of their All? O pity, pity dear Lord,

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the beſotted fooliſh world, and give me more compaſſion to ſouls, that I may with incomparably greater earneſtneſs and tenderneſs plead thy cauſe with them, and reſolve to give them no reſt, till I have perſwaded ſome of them in good earneſt, to look after the great and weighty affairs of Eternity, and the making ſure of their Friend.

Eighthly, He is a ſympathizing Friend. It goes to his heart (with Reverence be it ſpoken) when any injuries are done to any of his; when his friends are wronged, it touches him to the quick: He is tender of them, as of the apple of his eye. Again, *He that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me.* Never was tender-hearted Mother more pitiful over her only Child, then God is to them which love him, never was any friend ſo much concerned for another as God for his. What elſe mean thoſe high expreſſions of pity in *Iſa.* 63. 6. *In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the Angel of his preſence ſaved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.* It was not once or twice that God did ſo by them; but in all their afflictions, he was afflicted; which was not expreſſed in ſome cold formal words, ſuch as theſe: Alas poor creatures, they are quite undone, their enemies are very barbarous, but he ſhew'd it in that muſt real demonſtration; by ſaving of them by the Angel of his preſence. A verbal kindneſs coſts little, and helps little. But ſuppoſe his friends are carried Captive, are they not quite out of the reach of his help? No, his love, pity and power, will find them out in any place under Heaven; and if they be ſlaves, he will redeem them, though he gives

Kingdoms and Nations for their Ranſom. In his love and in his pitty he redeemed them; and when by hard uſage they are grown ſo weak and feeble, that they can ſcarce go nor creep, why, he will carry them in his arms, and bare them. And thus he did of old; and his affections are rather greater than leſſer now, than they were then. The mother can be weary of carrying a dirty ſcreaming child; ſhe thinks it leſs trouble to whip him, or to let him lie till he hath cried himſelf weary; ſhe is is loath to lug ſuch a troubleſome thing up and down all the day long. But yet ſuch is the tenderneſs of this Father, that he carries his all the day long, though they be ſo heavy, ſo unquiet, ſo dirty. But of that preſently. How oft do you read of ſtrange pity in the book of the *Judges*; when they had by their own folly more then once brought themſelves into calamity, how do his bowels yern over them; and when any of his are groaning under any trials or temptation, what ſending and running is there? how many Cordials are prepared for them? what calling to this ſervant and that ſervant to attend them with all the care that may be, and to comfort them in this ſtate? and in caſe of abuſe, how doth he ſhew his love to them? If you ſhould ask *Pharoah*, he would tell you, that Gods Friends are edge tools: why elſe doth the Lord lay about him with ſo much indignation, when they are oppreſſed. Nay, for their ſakes he rebukes Kings, ſaying, *Touch not mine Anointed, and do my Prophets no harm*; if they do, be it on their peril. How did he bare the afflictions of his people *Iſrael* in *Egypt*? did he ſtand ſtill as if he were unconcerned? did he ſhut his eyes and not ſee? or did he ſtop

his

his ears to their cries? No, no, he ſees, he ſees the ſufferings of his in *Egypt*, and that both enemies and friends too ſhall know the one to their comfort, and the other to their coſt, *Exod.* 3. 7. How doth he awaken for their help, and gird on his ſword upon his thigh, and march out with fury? how doth he cloath himſelf with vengeance, as with a robe, and brandiſh his Glittering ſword, and ſheath it in the hearts of his and their enemies? Wherefore is it that God hath ſo many controverſies with *Edom*, *Ammon*, and *Amalek*? Why doth he Muſter up his forces with violence againſt *Babylon*? Whoſe quarrel doth he engage in? What was the ground of that War? If you read over all the indictments that are before this great Judge, you will find this a common one their hatred of his people; and this to be ſure he will not put up. And that which puts an Accent upon all this, is the unworthy carriage of moſt of them towards him all this while. But of that under the next *Head*, which is this.

Ninthly, He is the moſt patient Friend: Never any one in the world could have digeſted ſuch affronts, born ſuch indignities, as God hath many a time, and even from the beſt of thoſe that he takes into this intimacy with himſelf. Had it not been for this Covenant of Friendſhip, *Judah* and *Ephraim* too had been ſoon unpeopled; as for them they ſoon forgot their Covenant, yet for all that God remembers his; though *Ephraim* forget to be a Child, yet God can't forget to be a Father. Read that Text and wonder, *Hoſ.* 11. 7, 8. *And my people are bent to back-ſliding: though they called them to the moſt high, yet none at all would exalt him.* Though they had many compaſſionate

Prophets that called after them day and night, when they ſaw them turning their backs upon God, yet they were not minded. Who now would conceive that God ſhould ever think a thought of kindneſs towards them more? yet hear what God ſaith, *How ſhall I give thee up,* O Ephraim? *how ſhall I deliver thee,* O Iſrael? *how ſhall I make thee as* Adam? *and how ſhall I ſeal thee as* Zebulon? *My heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceneſs of mine anger. I will not return to deſtroy* Ephraim; *for I am God and not man; the holy One in the midſt of thee, and I will not enter into the City.* Well, now tell me if ever there were ſuch a compaſſionate, meek, patient Friend. *Ephraim* was up in open Arms againſt his maker, he did rebel moſt unworthily againſt his good Lord and Friend, to whom he was bound by infinite Engagements. *Ephraim* had quite caſt off God, and he will have nothing to do with him; and *Judah* is not far inferiour to his treacherous Brother; and what will God do? One would think, as I ſaid before, he ſhould eaſe himſelf quickly of ſuch falſe Friends; one would think that after ſuch unfaithfulneſs, he ſhould for ever baniſh them his Court; one would ſoon conceive that he ſhould think of diſ-inheriting ſuch rebellious Children; for theirs was not the firſt, ſecond, nor third time that they had ſerved God thus; who then could imagine that he ſhould ever trouble himſelf with them any more? Should one not look every day when he ſhould quite caſt them off? Why, God ſeems ſometimes to threaten as much, and ſeems ever and anon to Act towards them, as if he would never

never look upon them more while the world ſtands. Go ſaith God to your Idols, let them ſave you? what do you come to me for; you have refuſed to have me for your God; go cry to your gods, and let them deliver you. Thus he ſeems to turn away his face; yea, for all that, ſee how ſoon he forgets his diſpleaſure, *Ephraim* is his Child, his dear Child, and he can't but pitty him; and how ſhall I give thee up, O *Ephraim*, &c. how hardly is God brought ſo much as to chaſtiſe his Children; he never corrects them, but when there is an abſolute need of it; ask the Church under the rod, and ſhe can't but ſay as much, *Lam.* 3. 32, 33. *For though he cauſe grief, yet will he have compaſſion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of men.* He calls judgment his work, his ſtrange work: and when he doth correct his ſtubborn Children, how doth he many times give them a laſh and a kiſs, a frown, and a ſmile? O what would have become of the holieſt men living, if God ſhould upon every provocation have broke with them. If God ſhould mark iniquities, O who ſhould ſtand? Which of the fallen Sons of *Adam* hath not abuſed his high Kindneſs? and yet for all that, how is his Patience and goodneſs exerciſed towards them; well might the Pſalmiſt make that the burden of one of his ſongs, *O that men would praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works towards the children of men*; and that of another, *For his mercy endureth for ever.* What created being could have born the thouſandeth part of that from any hand that God doth every day from his deareſt children? What peeviſhneſs, and unfriendly quarrelling,

relling, what Murmuring and repining, doth he bear, even from them for whom he hath done such great things? How strangly do they carry themselves! how seldom and complemental in their visits of him! how cold and formal in their addresses to him! how frequently are they conversing with his baseſt enemies! How much treachery and underhand dealing doth he find in them! yet for all this, how great are his kindneſſes, and how open are his arms, upon their acknowledgement, to receive them again! Little do we think what unkindneſs the Lord over-looks; and indeed except we knew what it was to be infinite in holineſs, could we any way conceive how infinite his Patience is, *Pſal.* 106. 43, 44. *Many times did he deliver them: but they provoked him with their counſel, and were brought low for their iniquities. Nevertheleſs he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry, and he remembred for them his Covenant*, &c. Here, here's Patience, here's love and goodneſs with a witneſs! What Prince under Heaven would truſt a Rebel, that hath been in arms a hundred times againſt him, and that at the beſt doth ſerve him with ſo little delight? What friend would continue his familiarity and kindneſs there, where he hath found abundance of falſeneſs? and who but thou, O God, is ſo merciful and gratious, Long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth? As for the trouble that any of his meet with, moſt commonly they may thank themſelves for it; and it's always ſent them in kindneſs: there is none of them all but may ſay, this is my iniquity, this is the fruit of my back-ſliding, this I have got by my eſtrangement from God.

Tenthly,

Terribly, He is an honourable friend, and to be acquainted with him is the higheſt honour in the world. This word, honour, ſounds great in the ears of this proud world; what running and catching to get a little of it! How do many undervalue their lives, and make nothing to hazard their blood for a little of that men call Honour; ſome prize it above riches and wealth, and care not almoſt at what rate they purchaſe it; and yet in the mean while they are furtheſt from that which they ſo greedily deſire, and they run away from that which they ſeem to purſue. Poor ignorant man is fearfully miſtaken, he calls that his honour which degrades him, and takes that for his glory vvhich is his ſhame: Hovv is he pleaſed vvith that vvhich vvhen he hath, he neither ſees nor feels, and ſcarce knovvs vvhat it is! (*Epict.*) What is it, O man, that thou loſeſt thy ſleep for? vvhat is it that thou art at ſo much charge to buy? that rather than you vvill vvant it, Eſtate, Blood, Life and Soul, and all muſt go for it? Knight, Lord, Earl, *&c.* Worſhipful, Right-vvorſhipful, Honourable, Excellent, Gracious, are big vvords, and make a great noiſe; but is this the true honour? vvill theſe vvords vvithout the thing do a man ſo much good? a man, I ſaid, and ſo doth God ſay too, and death vvill make the biggeſt of them all knovv as much ere it be long; for all thoſe big vvords: vvhat if his breath ſtinks that ſpeaks theſe vvords, and his that hears them, be not much ſvveeter. (*Antonius*) Is it ſuch an honour to have a company of fools to call him vviſe that it may be is like themſelves? is it vvorth a Soul, to have it ſaid vvhen I am in hell, there lived a brave Gentleman, that kept a

Noble

Noble houſe, and brave Table, his Cellar was always open, one might come when one would, and drink as long as one could ſtand, and never hear, why do you ſo? and be always welcome; that is, in plain Engliſh, where a man might be incouraged to damn his ſoul. There lived a Noble gallant Perſon who bid defiance to the Almighty, that had courage enough to go to hell merrily, that had a deſire to carry as many along with him as might be; damning, ſwearing, curſing was their Language, ; eating, drinking, ſleeping, whoring and perſecuting the people of God their buſineſs. And are theſe your honourable Perſons? Nay, Go higher, to buſtle up and down in Cloth of Gold with a vaſt retinue; to have men on this ſide, and that ſide, bowing and cringing; and is this ſuch a buſineſs? Is it worth the while to keep ſuch a ſtir about that which a wiſe man may want, and a fool have? (*Anton.*) Will thoſe Names, that Grandeur and ſtate, theſe high Titles, render you more acceptable to God? will they procure you a freer acceſs into the preſence of that great King? will thoſe great words ſcare death? will he ſay when he comes to your houſe, this is a perſon of quality, I muſt not be ſo bold as to come near him? will your honour procure you a protection from the arreſts of this Serjeant? Where is the Honourable perſonage, the Gentleman, Knight, Lord, King, or Monarch, that hath lived a thouſand years: (*Lucian*) Are the wormes afraid to gnaw thy heart? Will thy fleſh never putrify? Will your Servants, or your Maſter either honour you in Hell? And is this all that you keep ſo much a ſtir for, that can do you no good in the grave, or in another world? Can

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that be better worth then Heaven, then God? O that we might but know what it is, that great thing is, which is preferred before Christ and everlasting glory? Again, I ask what is it that the Grandees of the world do so much idolize? Is it to be called Wise, Great, and Noble? But what if the wise God call such a one a fool? (*Epict.*) What if he know neither himself, nor his God, nor his intereſt? Hath he much greater reason to boast then a feather that some body will say it is heavy; or dung, that the Swine saith it is sweet, (*Juven.*) What profit is it for a man to be made great for betraying his Country, and flattering a Tyrant, who Yesterday was the son of a Stage-Player, and to morrow shall be shorter by the head? What good will it to a beggar that is ready to be starved, to be told that he is a Prince, a brave fellow, worth some thousands by the year? But would you know which is the ready way to true honour? I tell you, it consists not in the favor of them that must die like themselves, and before that few years be over, must stand but upon even ground with the meaneſt; it consists not in the sorry acclamations of them which measure a mans worth by his estate, and their dependance upon him; it consists not in the praise of them whose commendations some wise men have counted a discredit. But he hath shewed thee, O man, what is truly honourable, to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God, *Micah.* 6. 8. To bare relation to God as a Father, and to carry themselves as his Children, to be a Servant, and Friend of God; this, this is honourable, truly honourable; this is the heighth, the top of the Creatures preferment. To converse

converse with, and delight in his Maker. To love, admire, and rejoyce in God, and to love God, to take complacency in the soul; this is something indeed, this is honour, a wise man would not grutch to venture his Estate, his Blood, his All for this: And how few of the Gallants of the world understand the nature of this honour? How do most of them account that which is the only true badge of Nobility, a term of disgrace; and that which speaks a person highly honourable, and to have brave blood running in his veins, to be low, sordid, and much beneath them; as if it were below a Creature to serve his Maker, and a pitiful preferment to be advanced to glory. O that men of parts and learning, that persons of Quality should be so mistaken! O what's become of their Reason? Is it an honour, a preferment for a man to become a brute? We are ready to pity mad men, and to laugh at fools; but whether there be not more reason to bemoan the condition of most of the honourable persons in the world, I leave Christ and Christians to judge. Well then, will you be informed after all this by him, who hath all preferments and honours in his gift; I mean the great King, and he will tell you that Glory and honour are in his presence, 1 *Chron.* 16. 27. Mans onely honour and true dignity lies in his nearness, and acquaintance with God. A practical knowledge of his Maker is the Creatures greatest preferment. *David* was of the mind, that it was none of the lowest honours to be Gods servant, *Psal.* 84. It is upon the account of *Israels* near Relation to God that *Moses* reckons them the happiest, the most honourable people

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in the world. Becauſe God had avouched them to be his peculiar people, therefore they might well be ſaid to be high above all the Nations which God had made, in praiſe, in name, and in honour; *Deut.* 26. 18, 19. And upon this account, might a wiſe man have his choice, whether he will wear a Crown, and be a ſtranger to God, or Rags, and be one of his neareſt ſervants; he will not ſtand long before he determine the caſe, he will ſoon anſwer with him, *That he had rather be a door-keeper in the houſe of God, then dwell in tabernacles of wickedneſs.* If mens actions may ſpeak their Judgements, moſt of the Gallants of the world are of a far different opinion. But, O let me dwell for ever in his houſe, and ſtand always in his preſence; happy are they that ſee his face, happy are they that behold his beauty. This, this mans Crown, this is his higheſt honour and dignity, for God to be mindful of man, and for his Maker to viſit him; this ſets him but little below the Angels, this Crowns him with glory and Honour, *Pſal.* 8. 45. This is that which puts a true perſonal worth upon any one; and therefore the *Pſalmiſt* thinks thoſe the excellent perſons, in whom is his delight. Upon this account the Scripture ſaith, *The righteous man, who is in covenant with God, is more excellent than his neighbour.* The pur-blind World, they judge altogether by the outward garb; they ſee the face, the rich apparel; they ſee the eſtate, but they ſee not that inward excellency and beauty that may be under but mean habit: they are ready to deſpiſe the Noble Worthies of the World, ſuch as can look upon Kingdoms as ſmall things in compariſon of what they have an intereſt in.

Who

who can call God Father, and Christ Brother. Have you never heard of a King in mean apparel, of a Prince without his Robes upon his back, or his Crown upon his head? and will you say that therefore he was but a common person? But those heavenly Creatures that have a more spiritual refined sense, that understands something of things and Persons, are quite of another mind, they can look upon great ones in the midst of their gallantry, without a friend in Heaven, as mean persons that have no interest to speak of; and many of them, for all their greatness, to be in a far worse condition then Dogs and Toads. They can also look upon a poor despised Saint, a contemned Christian, though as to a carnal eye; he should look as if he could scarce speak sense, to be a favourite of Heaven, a person of quality; such a one as this he values as the Son of a King, a Citizen of *Zion*, one of the Royal Race, one of that glorious Retinue, that stand always in the presence of God to serve him, the least of which are Kings and Priests to their great Lord, *Rev.* 1. 6. *By faith he sees their Crown, and looks upon that Royal Diadem, which shall ere long be put upon their princely heads.* This was the great preferment they sought, this was the honour they most desired; as for the world and all its glory, they can well spare it for those that shall never be advanced to any higher dignity, to any better preferment. As for the Saint, as contemptible as he looks, he hath higher designs, nobler things, greater honours in his eye; and if that which the world so admires were the highest glory that a Rational creature were capable of, the top of mans preferment, why then he could look upon brutes

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themſelves as his equals, except in this, that their Pleaſures are more certain, and their Miſeries leſs underſtood.

It is ſtoried of *Conſtantine* and *Valentinian* two Roman Emperours, that they ſubſcribed themſelves *Vaſſellos Chriſti*, the vaſſals of Chriſt; and that *Numa Pompilius* eſteemed it a higher honour to be a *Friend* of *God*, than a *Lord* of *Men*. Conſider poor ſinner, conſider what honours you ſlight, what preferments you refuſe, what dignity you undervalue, when you make light of acquaintance with God. Had that brave Stoick, *Epictetus* I mean, known God in Chriſt, he would much more have wondered at the inconſiderateneſs of them which make nothing of being related to God as a Father; he would much more have pitty'd them which cleave to their lower, meaner kindred, beaſt, who had rather be like Swine than God, and rather be companions to their ſervants than their Maker. Seems it to you but a light matter to be a Kings Son? is it but a ſmall matter, think you, to call God Father? is it nothing to be born to a Crown Immortal, that fadeth not away? This is honour, this is preferment worth the having, worth the looking after, worth the venturing ones life for. This is true Nobility to ſtand thus nearly related to him, before whom the Angels do vail their glorious Faces, and at whoſe feet the four and twenty Elders lay their Crowns. The Queen of *Sheba* thought *Solomons* Servants, happy, who ſtood always in his preſence, and heard his Wiſdom; but what would ſhe have ſaid, had ſhe but known the honour and glory of this Prince! O bleſſed are thoſe that ſtand alwayes in thy preſence!

O God bleſſed are thy ſervants, bleſſed are thoſe which ſee thy Glory and hear thy Wiſdom; bleſſed are they that may have free acceſs to thee. O let me have this preferment, though I live like *Job* at his loweſt, and die like *Lazarus*. Let others ſue for the favour of Princes, let them make the beſt of what the world can give, let them deſire that which hath been dangerous to more than *Haman*; I hope I ſhould never envy them, might I but have more frequent and intimate converſe with God, may I be but acquainted with him; O may I have but a heart more to admire, love, and delight in Him, and ſerve him with the ſtrength and intenſneſs of my Soul while I am here, and ſtand for ever in his preſence, and behold his glorious Face with joy hereafter. O my Soul, what meaneſt thou, that thou ſtill ſpeakeſt ſo faintly and coldly of ſuch infinitely glorious things? Why doth not a new life animate thee at the very mention of theſe things? Haſt thou not far more cauſe to raiſe up thy deſponding Spirits with chearfulneſs, than old *Jacob*, when his Son *Joſeph*, who was Lord of that Land, ſent for him into *Egypt*? Thy Father, O my Soul, thy Brother is Lord, not of *Egypt*, not of *Goſhen*, but of *Eden*, of *Zion*; he is the King of that glorious City, the new *Jeruſalem*; Heaven is his Throne, and Earth is his Foot-ſtool, and yet behold the Waggons that he hath ſent for thee, behold the proviſion that he hath ſent to maintain thee comfortably in thy journey from *Egypt* to *Canaan*; is not this enough? O my Soul awake, up and ſee him before thou dieſt; behold, he is coming, the Bridegroom is coming, *Joſeph* is coming, to meet thee with a gallant

Train,

Train, in a glorious Equipage; It is but yet a little while, and thy Husband will come and fetch thee in Royal State, attended with a numberleſs retinue of Saints and Angels. O hadſt thou but an eye to behold their Chariots and Horſemen coming upon the Mountains: he is coming, he is coming, he will be here quickly, he will not tarry, he is at the door. Contemplate ſometimes on theſe things, and a little antedate that Glory by Spiritual Meditation; do but think what a brave ſight that will be to ſee the mountains covered with Chariots of Fire, and Horſes of Fire, when the Heavens ſhall bow before thy Friend, and the Earth ſhalt melt at his preſence, and yet thy Heart not faint within thee; when the King ſhall come in the Clouds to fetch his Friends to his own Houſe, where they ſhall dwell for Ever. This Honour have all the Saints.

Eleventhly, He is a ſuitable Friend. It is ſuitableneſs that ſweetens Society. I can eaſily believe a poor Countrey Peaſant can take as much content in the Company of a poor man like himſelf, as in the Society of a Prince; an unlearned Country man is no way fit to converſe with Courtiers, and States-men; the vaſtneſs of the diſtance would ſo much ſwallow his mind, and the unſuitableneſs of his Spirit to ſuch company takes off that content which otherwiſe he might enjoy. But yet in Spirituals, though the diſtance between God and Man be beyond a poſſibility of our Conception, and the diſproportion infinite, yet the Soul of Man, being immediately from God, and Spiritual like God, and having a Divine new Nature infuſed into it by the Spirit in

Regeneration, it finds an infinite ſuitableneſs, pleaſure and content in the injoyments of Gods Preſence, and it is not ſunk, but raiſed by an Union, Converſe and Society with it's Maker. The truth of it is, did Man but underſtand his own Original aright, he would think it infinitely below his noble Parentage to converſe with, and have intimate delighful Society with any but God and thoſe which bare the ſame relation to God with himſelf, or to bring poor ſtrangers acquainted with him as well as themſelves. There is not a Match upon Earth fit for the Soul of Man to be Matched to: But in that other Country there is a Match indeed every way ſuitable; a Spirit for a Spirit, an everlaſting God for an everlaſting Soul; a precious Jeſus for a precious Soul, a holy God for thoſe which he hath made Holy like himſelf: and that is none of the leaſt of mans Happineſs, that notwithſtanding that infinite diſtance that is Naturally between him and his God, yet that God ſhould make in his Creature ſuch Noble Diſpoſitions, and ſuch Divine Qualifications, that there ſhould be the greateſt ſuitableneſs in the World between God and the Soul, and the ſoul and God; and they both take wonderful content in the enjoyments of one another. This is in part here, but compleated in Glory. This we may find oft in Scripture expreſſed in the neareſt Relations, and deareſt Affections. Hence God is ſaid to be a Father, and they his Children; a Husband, and they his Spouſe. Now what greater ſuitableneſs can there be than between Father and Children, Husband and Wife? God is alſo ſaid to delight in them, and they in him; to rejoyce in their Company, and they in His; and how

hovv could this be, except there vvere a ſuitableneſs in them one to another. Their vvills are ſuited; vvhat God vvills they vvill; and vvhat God loves, they love; and ſo vvhat they love, as his Friends, God loves; one doth not thvvart and contradict the other. O hovv ſvveet then muſt the company, the communion of ſuch Friends be! O vvere our hearts as they ſhould be! vvere vve more like God, vve ſhould quickly experience the unſpeakable joy of our Souls, hovv ſuitable a Friend he is to a ſoul: vve ſhould ſoon find, that as clay and ſtones are as unſuitable food for the body, ſo the world is unſuitable food for the ſoul to feed on, and that it is God alone that can fill and ſatisfie the vaſt deſires of it. O, I ſay again, vvere vve but as vve came out of our Makers hands, or rather vvere vve trimmed up in our eldeſt Brothers Robes, and brought into the immediate preſence of this great King, vvere vve ſet before that glorious Throne, vvhere the infinite brightneſs of his Majeſty ſhines, ſo that the Angels themſelves do vail their faces before him; yet for all that vve ſhould not long ſtand ſilent, as if the place and company vvere unſuitable to us, it vvould not be long before vve ſhould carry it as thoſe that vvere nearly related, and had intimate acquaintance vvith him that ſits upon the Throne. O the unſpeakable ſvveetneſs that vvill be in the enjoyment of his Company! no tedioufneſs, no irkſomneſs at all upon our Spirits. We ſhall quickly underſtand our vvork, our priviledge. O infinite goodneſs! O boundleſs love! O let me be alvvays ſolacing my Soul in the contemplation of theſe things! O let the very thoughts of them be a Heaven upon Earth to my ſoul! but

here, O here's the grief while we are here in a ſtrange Countrey, there is ſomthing (in all the poor fallen Children of *Adam*, nay, in thoſe of them that are recovered, and by grace brought into a re-union with God) there is, I ſay, ſome thing in God unſuitable to them, and in them unſuitable to God; and this, O this makes our lives ſo uncomfortable: but converſe with God will wear off a great deal of that. When thou comeſt to lay off thy Rags, and to put off thy old ſuit, and to put on that new one that is making for thee, I mean after Death, when thou comeſt to glory, thou wilt find the caſe ſtrangely altered with thee. In Heaven there will be a perfect Harmony, Suitableneſs and Agreement between God and thee for Ever; and thou wilt take infinite complacency and delight in him, and he in thee. And thus ſhalt thou ſpend Eternity in unconceivable joy, delight and pleaſures. This is Heaven, a perfect ſuitableneſs to God, and enjoying him for Ever. O when, when, when ſhall it once be? *Come Lord Jeſus, come quickly, Come O bleſſed Father by thy Spirit, and burn up what is unlike thee! O Create a greater ſuitableneſs between my Soul and thee. O Come thou down to me, or take me up to thee!* O could we but talk with one of thoſe happy Creatures that hath been in the very preſence of God in glory, and ſhould we ask him, whether he were not weary of the ſame work, of the ſame company, the ſame place; what anſwer, do you think he would make you? No more weary than a man upon the Rack but juſt before would be of perfect eaſe; no more than a healthful hungry Man is of eating; no more weary than the Sun is of running, than the

Fire

Fire of aſcending, or a Stone of falling towards the Center. *Sen. Epiſt.* 10. *I know not where I had rather be than with him: I was once upon Earth as you are now, and now I am in Heaven, and in neither of both theſe places can I find one that I can take more delight in than God.* I muſt ſay as he, *Pſal.* 73. 24. *Whom have I in Heaven but Him? and there is none upon Earth that I can deſire in compariſon of Him.* I can't deſire a better employment than a delightful conſtant attending upon my God; Can I have better Company than ſuch a Father? Can a greater happineſs be conceived than Eternal glory, a pleaſanter place than Heaven? That which I can ſpeak, you can't hear; and could you (though in this perfect glory) I can't expreſs what you will find and feel when you come hither. O had I but known ſo much as I do now, when I was in your condition upon Earth, I ſhould with incomparable greater earneſtneſs have fought after acquaintance with God than I did. *In his preſence is fulneſs of Joy, at his right hand are pleaſures for Evermore:* Now I feel, now I know it. I thought one ſmile ſweet upon Earth, but now I ſee and feel infinitely more: what you enjoy now, is a ſhadow in compariſon of what you will enjoy hereafter. O what do you mean, that you prize his favour no more, that you get no more intimate acquaintance with Him? What do you mean that you are ſo unwilling to come to this place of joy? O, were you but poſſeſt of what I ſpeak of, you would ſay what I ſay, you would never be weary of praiſing and ſerving him, you would never wiſh your ſelf out of his preſence, and think it not poſſible to be in more ſuitable ſociety. Is it ſo, O my ſoul? what then doeſt

thou here? Make haſt O my ſoul, ſtay no longer here below, but know thy priviledge, underſtand where thy comforts are.

Twelfthly, He is a wiſe Friend, All the men and women in the world have great, mighty affairs to manage, and they want Skil, Wiſdom and Diſcretion for the right management of theſe things, they are wofully to ſeek as to their great buſineſs; they are wiſe to do evil, but in Spirituals, they are become ſtupid, ſottiſh Fools; and as to the carrying on of their great work, they do it with the greateſt imprudence in the world: and they will moſt certainly for ever undo themſelves, except one that is wiſer than themſelves undertake to help them. All things go backward with them, and they labour in the very Fire whileſt they act without God, and it is impoſſible it ſhould be otherwiſe as long as there is ſuch a diſproportion between mans buſineſs, and his Spirit? Man is carnal, and his work is ſpiritual. Would an Ignorant poor Creature that is but one remove above a Beaſt, be fit to manage the great matters of Government? How ridiculouſly would he behave himſelf in a Chair of State! How ſtrangely would an unlearned Man bungle, ſhould he go about to open one of the profound Demonſtrations of Mathematicks! But a natural Man is far more unkilful than any of theſe, as to the carrying on of that great Imployment that he hath to look after, while he is on this ſide Eternity; his buſineſs is to ſerve his Maker, but what pittiful work doth he make of it? Man is made for an everlaſting State, he is ſent into this world to provide for another: a Good, a Happineſs there is, which he is to look after;

after; he once had a fair Eſtate, but he hath ſpent and loſt it all, and he is to ſee to the recovering of it again. He hath been in Arms againſt his lavvful Soveraign, and been guilty of the higheſt Treaſon, and thereby hath forfeited his Life, his Soul; novv he hath his pardon to ſue out, and hovv doth he go to vvork in this one thing? To mention no more, Why he goes to beg a pardon arm'd Cap-a-pe, and vvith his Svvord dravvn, he comes to ask pardon for one Treaſon, and he is found acting of another. *Lord have mercy upon me, and give me leave to break thy Laws*, is the ſum of all his prayers. He talks of Heaven, and yet makes all the haſte he can to Hell; he is told he is out of the vvay, but he laughs at him that tells him ſo; and that's his beſt; Sometimes he rages, and deſires vvith all ſpeed to remove him that vvould ſet him in the Road to *Zion*; he calls for a Hatchet to cut dovvn the bough upon vvhich himſelf ſtands. And this is your Man of Wiſdom. The man is under ſail in the midſt of Rocks and Sands; and if he vvould but look, he might ſee many doleful Spectacles, to the tops of Maſts, ſhip-vvracked ſouls I mean; and though the Pilots tell him of the danger, yet he ſays, he vvill never believe; but that's the beſt and the ſafeſt road to the Harbour, and ſo on he goes as if he vvere ſure he could not miſcarry; and all this vvhile he vvill not be perſvvaded but that he acts very vviſely; he judgeth it one of his greateſt comforts, that he runs to miſery vvithout any hinderance; and hovv can it othervviſe be, except men vvere ſpiritually Wiſe? and vvho can teach man this Wiſdom? Who ſhall inſtruct him? Who ſhall help him, novv his affairs are upon the matter

ter almoſt deſperate? why, if thou wilt but hear, here is one that will yet undertake their foul cauſe if you will be adviſed by him; for this is he will ſet all at right. And O how doth he call after you! How willing to give you his advice! how deſirous to aſſiſt you. *Prov.* 1. 20. &c. *Wiſdom cryeth without, ſhe uttereth her Voice in the ſtreets: She cryeth in the chief places of concourſe, in the openings of the Gates, ſhe uttereth her Words, ſaying, How long, ye ſimple ones, will ye love ſimplicity? And ye ſcorners delight in ſcorning, and fools hate Knowledge? Turn ye at my repooof: Behold, I will pour out my Spirit upon you, I will make known my Words unto you.* And will you ſet at naught all his Councels, and have none of his reproofs! Will you rather be ruined than be beholding to him for Advice. Let me put in one word; if this wiſe Counſellor be not for you, he will be againſt you; and if you find any that can order your ſad affairs more to your advantage, I pray make uſe of him; but if you will be ruled by him, you can't miſcarry, as ill a condition as your are in; though thou beeſt quite broke, yet he will give you ſuch a ſtock as that you may ſet up again, and ſuch directions as that you can't but thrive, if you will but follow them. It is he that teacheth his Spiritual Frugallity, not to part with that for a triſle which will be a rich commodity ere long; it is he who perſwades us to make the beſt uſe of every thing; it is he that teacheth Fools more true wiſdom than the great Polititians of the World; though the world judge them weak, yet they have wit enough to make a good Bargain; to value Heaven before Hell, to fly from everlaſting Burnings. They are wiſe enough to know what

what is for their real advantage, and what not. This is he that would bring thee acquainted with him. It is he who giveth his ſo much underſtanding, as to know the true worth of things, and the difference between good and evil; finite and infinite, time and Eternity. VVho is it that *David* goes to for council, when his politick Enemies combined againſt him? Where doth he adviſe? who brings him out of all his intricacies? Is it not He that I am perſwading you to go to, who was never out-witted, who can eaſily turn the councel of *Achitophels* into fooliſhneſs; It is he who can infatuate the great Sages of the VVorld, and make them weaker than Children in their Councils. And this is he who will be a conſtant Councellor to all thoſe that are his friends, his acquaintance. *Seneca, Epiſt.* 41. 81. gives excellent Council indeed, which if we will preciſely follow, our matters can't but ſucceed. *Art thou never in any ſtraights? are all thy affaires carryed on with ſo much prudence, both as to time and Eternity, that thou ſtandeſt in no need of advice? Art thou ſure that this will always be thy condition? If not, why then wilt thou not be perſwaded to ſtrike in here?* Why if you will believe them, vvhich to their Comfort have tryed him again, and again, it is your unſpeakable intereſt and vviſdom to get God for your Friend, and then vvhatſoever you do, ſhall proſper by his adviſe; a poor Chriſtian can out-vvit all the policy of Hell, and ſhevv himſelf more vviſe than thoſe vvhich call himſelf Fool, and count him mad, *Pſal.* 73. 24. *David* durſt truſt none elſe to guide him; but vvith his conduct he doth not fear but that he

ſhall

ſhall come ſafe to his journeys end, *Thou ſhalt guide me by thy counſels, and bring me to thy glory.* And again he ſaith, by the help of this Counſellour he was wiſer than his teachers, *Pſal.* 119. 18. Here therefore what you had beſt to do as matters ſtand with you, *Prov.* 4. 11. *He will teach thee in the way of Wiſdom: He will lead thee in the right paths, When thou goeſt, thy ſteps ſhall not be ſtraightned, and when thou runneſt, thou ſhalt not ſtumble, &c.* 1 Cor. 1. 15. *Becauſe the fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than men.* That which looks moſt contemptibly, if throughly underſtood, will be found to have more depth in it than the wiſeſt men of the world can reach. To chooſe ſuch a Friend this is wiſdom, this is prudence. The godly man knows that he hath a great cauſe to be decided ere long, and that it will be no loſt labour to make the Judge his Friend. Well, what ſay you, ſinners, is this conſiderable that I do now propound, or is it not? Can you plead your own cauſe, can you clear your title to glory without him? if not, be well adviſed before you ſlight ſuch a motion, as I now do make to you.

13. He is an immortal Friend. I, that's a Friend indeed. If one friend could be ſure to live juſt as long as the other; and were friends ſure never to want the advice, comfort, ſociety, and help one of another, it would not a little advance the worth of a friend. But where is ſuch a one to be found? What Hiſtories can give us an account of ſuch amities? Let perſons be united in never ſo cloſe an union, conjoyned in the faſteſt knot that nature can tie, yet death will firſt or laſt diſſolve it, So that ſometimes I have

have been almoſt of this mind, as to all worldly friends, conſidering them abſtract from God (for grace in any friend doth unſpeakably ſweeten the relation, and ſuch a relation will not dye) if we compare the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of poſſeſſing, and the bitterneſs in loſing, with the ſweetneſs of enjoying; that it's ſomewhat difficult to reſolve, whether ſuch ſhort-liv'd Comforts are worth the looking after. Not but that I think a friend, a true friend, a great mercy, and much to be deſired; but really, if our Affections be not for Gods ſake, if our love be not regulated by Religion, I can eaſily believe that the bitterneſs in loſing doth over-ballance the pleaſure in enjoying. And who would much trouble himſelf to get that with care, which muſt be poſſeſt with fears, and will be parted with with Tears? All worldly enjoyments will ſerve us thus. When we expect moſt from them, and pleaſe our ſelves to think what Content we Enjoy in them, ten to one, if God love us, but that he either imbitters, or takes away that Comfort from us. One ſaith, I had a dear Husband, ſuch a one as never woman had, but he is Dead, I have loſt him. Another ſaith, I had a precious Child, a Brother, but he is gon. And every body will be in this note firſt or laſt. And if the caſe be thus, who would be ſo fooliſh as to let out the ſtrength of his ſoul, upon that which he may ſoon be deprived of? But here, here's a Friend, whom you need not fear over-loving, nor loſing; a never dying Friend, one that will be ſure to out-live you, (*Ar. Epict. l. 3. c. 22.*) *Say of what you will, that it is mortal, and you have diſgraced it enough? for how can*

that

that be of any great worth which can die, and when I have most need of it I may want; but this can't be said of God, he only is immortal, and not subject to changes. As for the favour of Princes and great Ones, at the best, it is but an uncertainty: for it may be all thy hopes are bound up in his life, and that hour which puts an end to his dayes, puts a period to thy Comfort? But it is another kind of friend that I would have you acquainted with. O why do Christians dote upon that which is so short liv'd? Make but choice of this friend, and you shall never say of him, he is dead, I have lost him. *Wherefore put not your trust in the Son of Man, in whom there is no help; for his breath goeth forth, and he returneth to his Earth. But happy is he that hath the God of* Jacob *for his help, whose hope and love is fixed upon the Lord his God which made Heaven and Earth,* &c. *That God who is called the Living God,* Psal. 146. 3, 4, 5, 6.

14*thly*, He is a present friend, a friend that is alwayes in all places. Mans condition may possibly be such, as that he may be deprived of the company of his deareſt worldly Relations, he may be sequestred from the society of his most helpful and necessary Friends! How oft have the dear Children of God been clapt up in Dungeons, not only from the sight, but from the knowledge of their most affectionate acquaintance? It's no unusual thing for them to be Banish'd from their native Country. Wives and Children, among Savage Men and Beasts, they have no man to make their complaints to, but such as will increase their sorrows. How frequently may they be in such a condition, as that they may not see, hear or speak to any Friend? what

Bolts

Bolts and Bars, what Walls and Guards to keep them from them, which if they could not free them from, yet might in ſome meaſure alleviate their miſery? But now God is ſuch a friend, who cannot, who will not be kept out from his by Walls of Braſs or bars of Iron, he will find out his Friend in the darkeſt hole, and bare them company there in ſpight of all the powers of Hell, O how reviving are his viſites? What Cordials doth he bring along with him? This is that which makes the people of God ſo very chearful, when their Enemies make account their condition is ſuch, as that it hath no mixture of joy or comfort in it. Was that a Priſon or Heaven where thoſe Martyrs were ſinging Hallelujah? Was that a time, to be ſo merry, when all the World diſowned them, when they were loaded with Reproaches, and Irons, and Chains, counted the troublers of the Nation, mad-men, Hereticks? The caſe is clear: the ſight of this friend made them forget their Scorns, and think their chains Gold, and their Priſon Liberty. It was God that ſpake it, and he hath been found to be as good as his word, *Iſa.* 43. 1, 2. *Thus ſaith the Lord that created thee, O* Jacob, *& that formed thee, O* Iſrael: *Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy Name, thou art mine: When thou paſſeſt through the Waters I will be with thee: and thorow the Rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee: when thou walkeſt throw the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt: neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee.* Who was that which bore the three children Company in the fiery furnace? who was that which went into the Lions Den to viſit *Daniel?* who brought *Paul* alive to the

ſhore

ſhore when the ſhip in which he went was wrak't? Was it not this Friend, that I am now ſpeaking of? I might be large in reciting the Miraculous preſervations which God hath vouchſafed to his, which is a manifeſt token of his preſence; when none can come near, beſides he will not be far off. In the greateſt Extremities, when none durſt own them, then God reckons it time for him to ſhew himſelf. It was not for nothing that the *Pſalmiſt* could ſpeak ſo chearfully when others were quaking. *Pſal.* 46. 12, *&c.* VVhat was it that bore up his ſpirits, when there were ſuch dreadful Commotions? What refuge hath he to ſhelter himſelf under in time of ſuch Calamity? In what doth his ſtrength lie, that he is ſo confident? VVhence doth he expect a ſupply, that he holds it out ſo bravely, when his Enemies are ſo numerous, and his Friends ſo ſcarce? VVhy *David* hath his inviſible Friends, as well as viſible Enemies. Ask him, and he will tell you, That God is his refuge and ſtrength, and he is his confidence, and he will come in when he hath the greateſt need: he will be a very preſent help in trouble. And that is the reaſon that *David* will not fear, though the ſtorm were far greater than ever yet he was in, though the Earth vvere removed, and the Mountains were caſt into the midſt of the Sea; though the foundations of the Earth vvere ſhaken, though the Sea ſhould roar and threaten the earth vvith another deluge, he can ſleep as ſecurely as a perſon little concerned; and this he can ſpeak, not only for himſelf, but for the whole City of God; God is in the midſt of her, ſhe ſhall not be moved. The Saint

hath

hath a Friend that will bear him company in all places in all dangers, and in his Company he need not be afraid. Let the leaſt Child that God hath, give but one cry, and he vvill ſoon awake. It can't but be ſo from the ſpirituallity of his Nature, the immenſity of his Being, and the infinitneſs of his Love. It vvas Orthodox Divinity and Doctrine that *Ar. Epictetus l. 2. c.* 14. Preached (though but a Heathen) vvhen he ſaid, *That the firſt Leſſon that became a wiſe man to Learn, was, that there was a God, and then, that nothing in the World could be concealed from him, and that he knew not only our outward Actions, but our moſt ſecret workings, our cloſeſt curtain buſineſſes; and not only ſo, but even our thoughts, projects and principles: Which ſpeaks him every where, and conſequently ready at hand to help his Friends at a dead lift. Wherefore* (ſaith the ſame Author, *Idem. l.* 3. *c.* 22.) *think not that thou art alone when thou art in thy Chamber, in thy Bed, when thy Curtains are drawn, when thou art lock'd up in a Priſon never ſo dark under ground; if thou art good, thou ſhalt have two Companions in ſpight of the malice of all thy Enemies, a good Conſcience, and thy God.* This made that brave Moraliſt to dare his Enemies to do their vvorſt to exclude his Friends from him. *Can* (ſaith he) *any man be Baniſhed out of the world? Whereſoever you ſend me, there will be the Sun, Moon, and Stars; but if not, God is there, I am ſure, with whom I may talk, to whom I may pray; he will bear me company, though all the reſt of my Friends be kept from me. And as long as you can't baniſh me from God, nor keep him from me, I ſhall reckon my ſelf at liberty; and ſhould I be ſent out of this world into another, even there I ſhould find my*

Friend; and he will ſcarce complain that is remov
from a place where almoſt all are his Enemies, to
Place where all are his Friends. One vvou
have thought theſe poor Heathens had been re
ding, *Pſal.* 139. Do you hear O Chriſtians, vvh
language thoſe forementioned perſons ſpeak? an
ſhall theſe that never had the thouſandth part o
that advantage for the knowing of God, ſpeak an
act thus, and ſhall Chriſtians have ſuch low thought
of God? Becauſe vve do not ſee God, ſhall vve
therefore not believe that he is preſent ever
where? he that denies Gods ovvn preſence, had up
on the matter as good deny his Being; for vvere i
not ſo, hovv could he Judg the vvorld vvith Juſtice
How could all things be ſuſtained by his Povver?
God takes this as a very high Indignity, that any
ſhould in the leaſt queſtion this glorious Attribute,
Jer. 23. 23, 24. *Am I a God at hand, and not a God*
afar off? Can any hide himſelf in ſecret places, that
I ſhall not ſee him, ſaith the Lord? Do not I fill Hea-
ven and Earth, ſaith the Lord. And is not this a
Friend vvorth the having, vvho vvill be ſure not to
be abſent vvhen you have need of him? the vvick
ed indeed ſay, hovv doth God knovv, and can he ſee
through the thick Clouds, and therefore they ſin
vvith confidence, and oppreſs the Friends of God
vvithout any fear; they hope God doth not behold,
they think Omniſcience knovvs not. I vviſh there
vvere not ſomething too like this ſomtimes in the
thoughts of Gods people too; but let me only
leave that one Scripture vvith the firſt ſort, *Pſal.*
94. 9. &c. *He that planted the Ear, ſhall he not hear?*
He that formed the Eye, ſhall he not ſee? He that
teacheth men Knowledge, ſhall not he know? The Lord

knoweth

leaveth, &c. As for the desponding Christian that begins to think God is out of the reach of his prayers, let me ask thee, O thou of little Faith, when did God ever absent himself from his in time of Need; When was he quite out of the hearing of their Cry? I know indeed he may hide himself, yet then he is near them also, to try their Love and hear their Voice, for God loves to hear his Children Cry; (Earthly Parents may correct their Children for Crying, but God Chastiseth his Children usually for their Silence.) When he seems furthest off, He is but behind the Curtain, he is there where he with pleasure sees how earnestly his Children look up and down for him; and then when they are ready to sit down weeping, as if they had lost their Father; when they think they are quite forgot, and their Enemies begin to Triumph, and to ask, where now is your God? Then he lets both Friends and Foes know that he is near. And what say you to all this, you that as yet are strangers to God? Have you gotten such a Friend as he is, that will always be at your Elbow, that can and will come to help you (when other friends are far enough off,) whether man will or no? Have you got such a Friend? If not, why then will you not now accept of his Acquaintance, who will be such a Friend to all that love Him? No good man is without the Company of God; he walks with God, he talks with God, he eats with God, he drinks with God, and is entertained by him, and he Sleeps in his Arms. God is with him in his Shop, in the Rode, at Home and Abroad, and who can miscarry that hath so helpful a Companion always with him? When thy Burdens are too heavy

do but complain, and he will either take them off thy back, or put under his own Shoulders, and help thee to go away lightly with them; he will assist thee in six troubles, and in seven he will give thee help.

15. He is a Soul-Friend, Soul-Friends are the best Friends. As Soul-Affairs are the mightiest Affaires; so those that give us the greatest help in those matters ought to be valued. God is the great Soul-Friend; expect not to find him a friend to thy lust, this scares the wicked from him, who would be glad to be acquainted with God, if he would gratifie their Lusts, and please their wicked Humors, and give them eternal Happiness after a life of wickedness; that is, would Ungod himself for their sakes. But hold there man; you shall sooner see the Sun black, and have Fire cold, and find a Heaven in Hell, than have God a Friend to your Sin. God doth not promise to furnish all his Acquaintance with Provision for their sensuality, he will not put a Knife into thy hands to stab himself, or to cut thy own Throat. There are two many of such Friends in the world, and men are generally so foolish as to count them friends, which deserve another Name; these are they which help men to Hell, and shew them the shortest cut to eternal Misery, and this must go for a special Kindness. Sure men and women will scarce be always of this mind. Must Poison in a gilded Cup go for a Cordial, and a Kiss, though with a Dagger, be taken for true Love? *Seneca* had more wit than to reckon such among Benefactors. He that can teach me the way to true Happiness, he that can help me to adorn, dress and trim my Soul? he by whose Instructions I

I shall be more in love with virtue, and out of love with sin; he by whose directions I may be acquainted with my self, and made truly to value that which is really most excellent, this shall be my friend, this shall be my companion. And where are such friends to be found? How few of them in the world? Do not most, that go under that sweet name of friends, do one another the grateſt unkindneſs that can be imagined? How do they encourage one another in an evil way, *Prov.* 1. *Pſal.* 2. How do men tug and pull to get one another apace into damnation; and if the wiſe world may be Judges, none muſt go for a friend, but he that would do me moſt miſchief; none muſt be counted an enemy, but he that deſires to do me the moſt real kindneſſes. This ſounds ſtrangely: Yet for all that, did it lie in my way, I could eaſily prove it. Yet I muſt confidently affirm, that every ones experience, firſt or laſt will ſay as much. Something of this I have taken notice of, in my converſing with dying men. I remember, once more particularly, being by a poor Creature that was juſt a going into another world, one of his old friends looked in to ſee him, at the ſight of which perſon he gnaſhed his teeth, and could not indure him in the room, but cryed out, this was he that brought me to this, I may thank him, or I had not been in ſo ſad a condition upon a death-bed. But this by the By. Open enemies are better than ſuch friends. I ſay again, do not expect to have God ſuch a friend. God loves his too well to let them undo themſelves; he knows the worth of Souls; and pitties them that would part with their Souls for a trifle, and therefore he tells men plainly, that

which may be really prejudicial to the healt of their Souls; he can't but let them know wh is food, and what is poyson: what else is t meaning of those vehement expostulations Why doth he send so many messengers one aft another? To what purpose else doth he tende such promises, such incouragements? Be it know therefore unto thee O man, if thou understand't the worth of thy own Soul, and would'st have that Soul of thine to do well for ever, and would't have a friend for thy Soul, that there is but on such a friend to be found in the whole world, and that is God. O hast thou no regard at all for thy precious and Immortal Soul? Dost thou never think of that excellent thing within thee? Dost thou not care though thy Soul starve, b naked and miserable for ever? Is it nothing to thee, that thy Soul hath not so much as a shelter to hide it self under, when a dreadful storm shall rise, and death shall turn it out of his old Tenement? Dost thou not believe that it must have a being somewhere for ever, and that either in everlasting Glory, or eternal Burnings? And are these small Matters with you? What, will you for all this take no care in the World about these grand affairs? Had a special friend committed but a Dog to thee to take care of, you would have thought your self engaged in gratitude and honour, to have suited your care of him to your respect to the person from whom you had him. (*Epict.*) *But dost thou not know, O man, that thy God hath committed a Soul to thy care, & hath told thee what thou shalt do to preserve the Life and Health of this thy soul, that it may be in good plight when he shall call for it. He doth tell thee what is its most natu-*

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ral food, and what is not wholsome. He tells thee what thou shalt do to have that Soul within thee everlastingly happy. And is all this of so little consequence, as to go in at one ear and out at the other? Are these things to be indifferent in? If mans Soul were like the Soul of a beast, the case were altered; if when his breath went out of his body there were an end of him, the matter were the less considerable; if he had ever a friend in another world, that could do as much for him as God can do, I should have little to say in this business. But since this is impossible, how can I bear to see thee neglect the making sure of such a friend? How can a Christian with any patience think, that those that he lives with, and dearly loves, should miss of such a Friend, without whom their Souls must be everlastingly miserable. If it were only for your bodies or estates, I should scarce use so many words, neither I believe need I; but when it is for your Souls and Eternity, who can be silent? Once more consider what a Friend thou mayst have; it is a Friend for thy Soul. Alas man, it is thy soul, thy precious Soul that lies at stake; that Spirit within thee, which is more worth than a world; it is that which is in hazard, and here is a Friend that offers thee to make that Soul of thine Happy for ever. Thy Soul hath abundance of Enemies: Some would debase it, others would rob thee of it, others would clap up a hasty match between that Noble Creature and a Servant, the World I mean; And there are very few that have any true kindness for it, and thou knowest not the worth of that Jewel, thy Soul: but here, here's a Friend, if thou wilt but leave it with him, he will take care of it, it shall not be marted away for

nothing. Here's one vvill do that for its ſecurity, honour and happineſs, that all the vvorld beſides can't do. If therefore thou haſt any love for thy poor Soul, if thou ſetteſt any price upon that precious thing vvithin thee; in a vvord, if thou vvouldſt have thy Soul do vvell in another vvorld. O ſtrike in here, cloſe vvith theſe tenders, liſten to the councel of him vvho offers you the beſt advice in the vvorld. He, he it is that novv offers thee that thou canſt never value enough; he it is that vvill Feed, Cloath, and portion that Soul of thine, and after that marry thee to his onely Son; by vvhich match you vvill be made for ever. O did men and vvomen but knovv vvhat a Soul is, did they imagine vvhat a dreadful miſcarriage of a Soul is, did they but in any meaſure underſtand the things of their peace, could they but conceive vvhat God could and vvould do for their Souls, I need to ſpend but little time in perſwading them to commit their Souls to him, to be acquainted with him, who will be ſure to take ſpecial care of their Souls, that they may do well, whatever is neglected. O could you but ſee, did you but know what a ſad taking they are in, that go into the other world with a poor naked Soul, and know no body in the world there, and have never a friend that doth take any notice of them, you would then think I ſpoke what I do with reaſon enough, and that my words were too ſhort, and my expoſtulations too faint in a matter of ſuch concernment. O ſinners, I tell you, nay, God tells you, Soul-matters are the greateſt matters in the world. I am ſure Chriſt thought ſo, or elſe he would not have been at ſo much coſt about them; thoſe that are in their wits and under-

understand themselves, they know as much too, and so will you, ere a few years, it may be hours, be past. Those that now make but a pish of all this, when they have been but one quarter of an hour in another world, will say as I do, that a Soul-friend is the only Friend, and that Soul-concerns are the great concerns, things of weight and moment indeed; and that it would have quitted the cost to have taken some pains to have look'd out for such a one that could have stood the Soul in some stead in that other world; and that above all, it would have been no folly nor madness to have accepted of the kindness of one that desired earnestly to be acquainted with them, and to do their Soul a good turn. O that they had but been so considerate, as to have embraced such a motion when it was offered! And this brings me to the next Qualification of this Friend.

16. He is a necessary Friend. There is an absolute necessity of being acquainted with him. 'Tis possible for a man that hath very few friends upon earth, to live as happily as he that hath many. Multitude of acquaintance, such as they are, may contribute much to a mans care and sorrow. And as for most friends, such as are commonly so called, it is better to have their room than their company. A man may live without the acquaintance of Nobles, he may be as Free, Chearful, and Rich without the knowledge of such as them. One may live holily, and die joyfully, and may be happy for ever, though he never saw the face of a Prince, though he was never at Court, though he lived and died a stranger to all worldly friends. One may be disown-

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ed by his Father, hated by his Mother, ſlighted by all his Relations, and have never a friend under the Sun that will own him, and yet for all that be in a ſtate of truer felicity, than thoſe that are daily attended with troops of viſitors, whoſe gates are ſeldom ſhut, whoſe houſes are never empty: but amongſt all that comes, God never comes to them, as for his company they are ſtrangers to it; this man I may write miſerable for all his great and many friends. And him that hath the company of God in acquaintance with his Redeemer I'le call happy, though he have never a friend in the world beſides. Multitude of friends ſeldom add much to our comforts, but always to our cares. A man may go to Hell for all his great acquaintance with men; but it's impoſſible, if we are greatly acquainted with God to miſs of Heaven. When men are unkind, if God be kind, it's well ballanced; but if God frown, whoſe ſmiles can comfort? I may be happy, though I am very little in mans favour; but it's impoſſible to be happy without Gods favour. To be a ſtranger to God, is to be a ſtranger to peace, joy, Heaven. O it's ſad being without God! If I ſhould declare the Judgement of moſt in the world, at leaſt if their practice may ſpeak for them, they ſee very little need of acquaintance with God. They do not write, *Muſt*, upon the things of Religion. They muſt eat, they muſt drink, they muſt ſleep, and if they want any of theſe things, they count themſelves in a ſad condition. But further, they muſt riot, they muſt be drunk, they muſt whore, they muſt have what their luſt calls for, let it be what it will, they muſt get into the favour of ſuch and ſuch a great

perſon

person whose displeasure they have incurred. These are things that the world say must be; they are reckoned among the necessary things; but they do not say they must have a Christ, they must be reconciled to God, they must deny themselves, they must seek first the Kingdom of Heaven; No, these are indifferent things amongst them, these are things minded by the by, if not matter of scorn and jesting; these the world thinks unnecessary things. It's necessary their flesh should be pleased, it's necessary the Devil should be obeyed, it's necessary they and theirs should be somebody in the world; these are matters of weight, for these they think it worth the while to toil and moil, to ride early and late, and to lose their sleep, and think they can never do too much; and all this while they see no need at all of getting a friend for their Souls, no need at all of knowing, loving and delighting in God. Well, seeing the case is thus, seeing it is no great matter whether you know God, or be known of him; be not then troubled at the day of Judgment, if God look upon you as a stranger then, be not grieved (seeing the knowledge of God is nothing with you) if God say he knows you not; if Gods presence be no such material thing, complain not then for the want of it; be content, if you can, to hear him say, *Depart, I know you not.* O, but shall I thus leave you, poor ignorant sinners? Consider for the Lords sake, for thy Soul sake, whether it be a necessary thing to avoid everlasting burnings; is it a necessary thing to be saved? Is Eternal Glory and Heaven necessary? Dare you say these are unnecessary things? If these be necessary, then I am sure

God

God and Christ are necessary; *For this is Life Eternal to know God, and him whom he hath sent, Jesus Christ.* O how will the case be altered ere long, with the God-hating and Christ-despising world? When they shall be quite despoiled of all that which they prized above the knowledge of God, when all their friends shall appear to be enemies, when all their hopes shall be swept down like a Spiders web: O will they not then be of this mind, that it was no such slight matter that I was so earnest with them about, that acquaintance with God was no such unnecessary thing as they took it to be; and that there was more need of getting an interest in Christ, than of running to a Play-house, or a Whore-house. How will they rend the skies with their fruitless wishes? How will the Mountains eccho with their doleful lamentations? O that God would but know them! O that they might not hear that word, Depart! But seeing all that to little purpose, how then will they exclaim against themselves? O that they should be such fools, that they should be so madly besotted, as to neglect the looking after acquaintance with God! Time was, that God would have had them to come to him; he called after them, and sent for them again and again, but they would none of his company, they desired not the knowledge of the most High; they said to him, Depart from us: and now they have what they then desired; now they see that the Ministers had cause enough to say what they did, and a thousand times more. As troublesome as it was to hear of Hell, it's worse to feel it. They see now *Must* is for the Soul, and not the Body. O

that

that men and women would be now as serious in their judgments about these things as they will be shortly? Consider, O man, that as little as thou mindest these things, these are the only things that are necessary. Thou *Must* have a God for thy Friend, a Christ for thy Saviour to save thee from thy Sins, or else thou *Must* be Damned, or else thou *Must* be Cursed for Ever. Thou mayst lie Racked upon thy bed of sickness, where none can help thee; thou mayst Rot in a stinking Dungeon, where no man can relieve thee; thou mayst be Roasted in the Flames, and yet for all this be a happy man. Worldly Ease, Pleasure, Health, Riches, are none of those absolutely necessary things. A man may go to Hell and have them all; and a man may go to Heaven and want them. Thou mayest have Eternal Rest in another Life, though thou hast scarce a day of ease in this. One may be a Favourite of God, though as miserable as *Job*. But what will you say, of that man that hath not a God to go to? This, this is the miserable man with a witness? O that seeing mens lives are so short, they would wisely husband their precious time in minding nothing but necessary things! O that unnecessaries might be cut off. When I am about to undertake a business, let me ask my soul this Question: O my soul, is this a business of absolute necessity? Hast thou not something of greater importance that is yet undone? We enter not into the Lists for Honour, where it is no great matter, whether we Conquer, or no; we perswade not men to busie themselves about Toys, we are not so importunate about a thing of nothing. No Sirs, as unnecessary as you think these things we speak of

are,

ſire, ere long you will ſay as much as we do, and more too; you'l ſhortly find, that it was as much as your life and happineſs was worth that lay at ſtake. Theſe are things we muſt mind you of, or elſe we hazard our Souls; and they are things that you muſt mind alſo, or elſe you hazard yours. I want ſignificant words enough, to expreſs the weight and importance of theſe things, O that what is wanting of that Nature, might be ſupplied with Tears, Groans and Compaſſions. I am through Mercy aſhamed of my own Heart, (O that I were more ſo) that I ſhould ſpeak of ſuch ſerious matters ſo ſlightly. It is not now a time to jeſt, O my Soul, when thou art to diſcourſe with miſerable Men and Women, which refuſe their Happineſs, and dote upon their miſery. Thou art now about a Work that concerns Souls, and their Eternal State. Tell me dear Friends, do you in ſober ſadneſs believe that you have immortal Souls? Do you indeed know that your Souls are naturally Enemies to God, and that if you be not Reconciled to God, that you muſt be dealt with as Enemies? Do you really believe all this? Do you believe what a dreadful thing it is to look ſuch an Enemy in the Face when he ſhall ſit in Judgment? Further, do you believe what it is to lie down in devouring Flames, and to dwell with everlaſting Burnings? Do you not think it a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God? And if you do not, let me tell you, you are vvorſe than mad; if you do believe all this, why, then let me ask you again, whether you conceive it unneceſſary to uſe the utmoſt Care and Diligence to get Acquainted with Him: Who can deliver you from

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the wrath to come? O Friends, I call you ſo, and I believe moſt of you love me dearly! O that you would do me one kindneſs; I ſhould count it the greateſt kindneſs that you can do me; why, what is that you ſay! Why, it is but to pity your own Souls, and to mind that one thing neceſſary, and to pity them that are Mourning for your dry Eyes, and hard Hearts? What ſay you to all this? If you have any thing to ſay againſt the neceſſity of theſe things, I am ready to plead the Caſe with you, &c. Well, if it be not neceſſary to know God and Chriſt, and lay in Proviſion for Eternity, what then is neceſſary? If it be not neceſſary to ſerve, love, and delight in Him, who can deliver from everlaſting Death, and reward with everlaſting Life, what then is? Once more, for your Souls ſakes conſider what you do, when you vigorouſly purſue worldly things, and look upon the Favour, and Diſpleaſure of God, as ſmall things! O write not theſe things down amongſt the ſuperfluous things which are to be minded by the by.' Remember this, that it is very poſſible for a man to be exceeding Holy, and yet to be altogether unknown to the World; but it is altogether impoſſible to be truly Happy, and yet unacquainted with God.

17. He is a tryed Friend, Thouſands and Millions can from their own experiences ſay all this, which I have ſaid of him, and much more; but I ſhall paſs this over at preſent, having hinted it already; and becauſe it may be I may touch upon ſomething of the ſame Nature hereafter.

18. He is an everlaſting Friend. I ſhall be but brief in ſpeaking to this Head, becauſe what might have been ſpoken of this, fell under that

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of his Immortality. Yet becauſe it is poſſible to conceive God immortal in himſelf, and yet by reaſon of Mans default, his Kindneſs to him to be finite; ſo it was in reſpect of the Angels that fell from him. But now, Bleſſed be Free Grace, Man ſtands upon ſurer Ground than ever he did; the Children of God have a firmer Bottom by far, than *Adam* had when he was in Paradiſe; his State is more ſecure, being once united to God in Chriſt, than that of the Angels of Heaven in their firſt Creation. For, that their State was mutable, is *de facto* proved; But now, bleſſed be rich Goodneſs, if we can but make ſure of Reconciliation with God, again it is impoſſible for us to miſcarry. God hath ſworn, and he will perform it, That the Heirs of Glory might have the more ſtrong Conſolation, *Iſa.* 54. 9, 10. *For this is as the Waters of* Noah: *for I have ſworn that the Waters of* Noah *ſhould no more go over the Earth, ſo have I ſworn that I would not be wrath with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the Mountains ſhall depart, and the Hills be removed, but my Kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee; neither ſhall the Covenant of my Peace be removed, ſaith the Lord, that hath Mercy on thee.* Gods children need not fear diſ-inheriting: His Gifts and Callings are without Repentance. If God loved us while we were enemies, how much more being reconciled, will he continue his Love to us? Once a Child of God, and a Child of God for Ever; once in favour, and never out of it again, *Rom.* 8. 35, 39. *Who ſhall ſeparate us from the Love of Chriſt? Shall Tribulation, or Diſtreſs, or Perſecution, or Famine, or Nakedneſs, or Peril, or Sword. Nor Height, nor Depth, nor any other Creature ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the Love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.* Who can

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pluck us out of the Arms of the Almighty? Who, or what is that which can alienate our Fathers affections from us? If the promiſe of God, which ſaith, I will never, never, never, never, never leave nor forſake you, be valid, if his oath bind him, if the blood of Chriſt continue always to be ſatisfactory, if his mediation can prevail, if the nature of God be unchangeable, we are well enough, we are ſafe, if this be but clear that we are really reconciled to God, if we be acquainted with him, we are kept by the mighty power of God through Faith unto Salvation. If they had been of us, ſaith the Apoſtle, no doubt they would have continued with us. It is poſſible indeed, yea, common for men to pretend love to God, and to ſeem to have a true friendſhip for him, and yet not to be truly ſo. To have a name to live, and to live are two things. It is not unuſual to bear God company (as I may ſay) abroad, and yet at home to have ſome body that they have a greater kindneſs for. It is common to go along with God (if I may ſo call it) in the external actions of Religion, and yet to deſert him at laſt, *Iſa.* 58. 1. 2, 3. *Mat.* 7. 21. There are many that ſeems to bid fair for Heaven, and if cap and knee will do, God ſhall have that; they will give him the huſk and ſhell, that they may keep the kearnel for one that they love better. Thouſands there are of ſuch perſons in the world; and theſe profeſs abundance of kindneſs for God, they come oft to his houſe, and ſit down there, and make as if they were his friends, and his acquaintance, and ſome of Gods ſervants, by a miſtake, may bid them welcome, but yet for all this they may be ſtangers; only they have

heard of God, and can talk of him, and it may be, have given him many tranſient viſits, but yet they want the real properties of Friends: they never knew what it was to be brought nigh to the Father, by the Son; to have a ſence of their loſt ſtate and eſtrangement from God, and under a ſence of this, to make earneſt inquiry after him; they never knew what it was to converſe with God, to have an intimate acquaintance with him; to be ſending out the breathings of their Souls after him, and to be unſatisfied without him? they took up a trade of lifeleſs duties, and that was all. As for the life and power of Religion, they never underſtood it: communion with God, they heard oft of, but never underſtood what it meant, they never ſavoured, and reliſhed the things of God, nor with any ſuitableneſs or complacency ingaged in his ſervice: And as for thoſe more ſecret actings of Religion, to take up the intereſt of God, to deſign his glory, to be deeply concerned for his honour, obſerving their affections, and the workings of their hearts in duty, to take notice of anſwers of prayers, or to look after their petitions, when they are out of their mouths, they know not what theſe things are. So that from hence it appears, that God, and they, were never really acquainted: no wonder then that they do forſake God, and are forſaken of him. The building might look neatly, and the houſe ſeem to be ſtrong; but becauſe it was built upon the ſands, it need not ſeem ſtrange, if it fall when the winds riſe, and the waves beat againſt it: but I ſay it, and ſay it again, the houſe that is built upon a rock will not, cannot fall: If a man be really united to God in Chriſt, and

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the vvork of Grace throughly vvrought upon him, it is impoſſible that God ſhould forſake ſuch a one. God can't but be true though man be falſe, he can't but value the ſatisfaction and interceſſion of his Son, he can't forget his ovvn nature, *Iſa.*49.15,16. *Can a woman forget her ſucking Child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the Son of her Womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of thy hands: thy walls are continually before me, &c.* I do not ſay but that God may ſuſpend the refreſhing intimations of his love; nay, he may quite hide his face, and his deareſt ones may look upon themſelves as free among the dead, they may reckon themſelves ſuch as have no acquaintance vvith God, and yet for all this be exceeding dear to God; this is clear'd by every days experience. Nay, I may ſay, I believe that there are very fevv of them vvhich knovv vvhat Gods preſence, ſmiles, and love is, but knovv in ſome meaſure vvhat it is to have his face hid, to vvalk in the dark, and to ſee no light. It is no unuſual thing of a Child of God to queſtion his ſtate, to fear vvhether all that he ever did vvere not in hypocriſie and formality; have not the beſt been made ſometimes to queſtion (eſpecially upon ſome notable fall) vvhether vvhat they did formerly did not proceed from meer common grace, or ſome leſs ſpiritual principle than the life of grace, and a divine nature vvithin them. Were there ever any of the Sons of *Adam*, vvhom riche mercy hath plucked as Fire-brands out of the fire, to vvhom the Lord hath ſhevved his marvellous kindneſs, and love in Chriſt, that hath kept their vvatch ſo exactly, that have vvalked ſo cloſely vvith God, ſo as ne-

ver to have the leaſt frown from him? were there ever any that lived all their days under a conſtant lively ſence of their intereſt in divine everlaſting love? if there be, they have fared better than *Job* did, they enjoyed more than ever *Heman* or *David* did. A Child of God may oft be in a ſad ſtate, but yet he is always in a ſafe ſtate: the purpoſe of God ſtands firm. Though for a ſmall Moment he ſeem to forſake them, yet with everlaſting mercies will he gather them: O Everlaſting! That's a ſweet word indeed in the ſaints ear, he would not that one word ſhould have been out of the Bible, left out of the promiſe for a world, *Iſa.* 54. If thou beeſt once truly acquainted with God, thy ſtate is as ſafe, thy condition as ſure as if thou wer't already in Heaven. God may and will chaſtiſe his with rods, but his loving kindneſs he will never remove from them, his mercy indures for ever. All that God gives to his friends and acquaintance; that is ſpiritual, is like himſelf, Everlaſting. God is not like ſhort-ſpirited man, every Moment changing, one day doting upon an object, and the next day hating it as much. An earthly Prince may one Moment ſet his Favorite at his Table, and the next command that he ſhould be hanged. But far be it from the unchangeable God, that he ſhould do thus. As for the great ones of the world, it hath been counted by ſome, and thoſe none of the weakeſt, no ſmall piece of policy, to keep out of their knowledge: their favours are ſo dearly bought, their kindneſs ſo uncertain, their diſpleaſure ſo dangerous, and yet ſo eaſily procured. But here it is far otherwiſe. It is God, and God alone that is an everlaſting Friend, in whoſe preſence

ſence there is fulneſs of Joy, and Pleaſure for evermore. O theſe everlaſting things are great things! An everlaſting friend, and everlaſting inheritance, everlaſting glory, everlaſting joy, everlaſting life, and everlaſting death, they are matters of weight! O why ſhould not our very Souls be over-powred with the very thoughts of ſuch things! O this unbelief, this unbelief!

19. He is one that is willing and deſirous to be acquainted with you. What I have ſaid before had ſignified little to us, were it not for this. It is a miſery, and no comfort, to hear and know the great things which we muſt go without. But this is that which puts life into all thoſe powerful *Motives* which I handled before. God is the moſt loving, moſt ſtrong, and rich Friend, and withall he hath in him a ſweet inclination to be acquainted with us. The tearms that he offers are the moſt reaſonable in the world. This, this is the comfort of all the poor fallen Sons and Daughters of *Adam*; that though they have run away from God, though they have left their Fathers houſe, and turn'd Prodigals; yet their tender-hearted compaſſionate Father is ready to receive them again; his arms are open, he meets them, while they are yet a great way off, he runs to them and falls upon their neck and kiſſes them, and expreſſeth the greateſt kindneſs to them, and joy for their return. O unparalell'd love! O infinite goodneſs! God hath expreſſed this his willingneſs to receive poor loſt ſinners abundantly throughout all the Scripture. If God had not been willing to have been friends again with man, what needed he to have given himſelf the

trouble of parting with his deareſt Son, and ſending him into the world to manage this great work of reconciling man to himſelf? why elſe was that precious blood ſhed? And to what purpoſe ſhould he ſend ſo many Prophets, Apoſtles, and Miniſters, for ſo many hundreds of years, riſing up early, and ſitting up late? why are they commanded to cry aloud, to uſe ſo much earneſtneſs, to compel poor wandring ſtrangers to come to his houſe, but that he might be acquainted with them? Can any one conceive that he ſhould do all this without the leaſt deſign of kindneſs? If all that God hath done to the reconciling man to himſelf, doth not ſpeak his willingneſs to be reconciled to them, what can? *Iſa.* 5. 4. Nay, ſo willing is he to receive them, notwithſtanding all their back-ſlidings, that he teacheth them how they may addreſs themſelves to him moſt acceptably, he puts words into their mouths which they may uſe with good ſucceſs when they come before him, *Hoſ.* 14. 1, 2, 4. Nay, that ſinners may be the more confirmed in their expectation of his favour, he hath moſt ſolemnly ſworn. *That he delights not in the death of ſinners, but had rather that they ſhould return and live.* VVherefore elſe is it that we are ſo ſtraightly commanded, as we will anſwer the neglect upon our peril before God at their terrible day, that we preach the word in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon? To what purpoſe ſhould *Paul* expoſe himſelf to ſo many hazards both by Sea and Land? VVhy ſhould he teach this Doctrine of Reconciliation night and day with Tears? Doth he not tell you that he did all this by Divine Diſpenſation, and that it was as much as his Soul was vvorth to

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wave this work? And doth not all this ſpeak his willingneſs to be friends again with man? Could not God have ſent Legions of Angels with flaming Swords in their hands, when he ſent his Son, and thouſands of Prophets, Apoſtles, Miniſters and Teachers? Might he not have proclaimed war againſt them for ever, when he followed them with the Embaſſadors of Peace? If he had had no thoughts of Agreement with them, could he not have ſpoken to them in thunder and lightning, with fire and brimſtone, as well as in the ſtill voice of the Goſpel? He could if he had pleaſed have made them to have known the breach of his Covenant, by giving them up to the will of their cruel enemies, God could as eaſily have cut off a whole world of us, as we can cruſh a moth, and eaſier too. But he is willing to ſhew forth the riches of his patience and goodneſs, that thereby ſinners might be brought to Repentance. How doth God further expreſs his willingneſs to receive returning ſinners, by engaging them by many temporal favours? Who preſerved that tender creature in the Womb, and brought it out of thoſe dark Chambers into light? Who kept that helpleſs infant after it was in the world? Whoſe flax and wool do we wear upon our backs? To whom is it that we are beholding for every crumb we eat, and every drop we drink? who ſpreads our table for us, and makes our cups to overflow? Who brought us from the brink of the grave, when we had received the ſentence from our Doctor and our Diſeaſe? And what is the Language of all theſe mercies, *but return, O back-ſliding Sinner, for in me is thy help found.* Love, de-

light in, and be acquainted with him, from whom thou haſt received ſo many kindneſſes. If thou wouldeſt accept of him for thy Lord, Husband, and Friend, who hath ſent thee theſe tokens, thou ſhalt have other favours than theſe be. Is not this the meaning of all the common mercies that we daily receive from him? Why? was not thy breath ſtopt with an Oath in thy mouth? Why is it that ſo many thouſands that were born ſince thy ſelf, are gone to their eternal ſtate, when thou art ſtill ſtanding? What haſt thou done to engage God more than others, that Worms ſhould not be feeding on thee, when thou art feeding upon the fat and ſweet? What is the *Engliſh* of all this? what are all theſe droves of mercies which God ſends to thee, but to cool thy enmity againſt him, and to make thee, who art marching out in thy warlike furniture, to meet him with tears of joy and friendly embraces? Is not, *Love the Giver*, written upon all his tokens? what means his frequent viſiting of thee but deſire of acquaintance with thee? Had he had no deſire at all to know you, and to be known of you, do you think he would have call'd ſo oft and ſo kindly at your door, would he have ſtood knocking with ſo much patience, and have ſpoke to you ſo lovingly, if he deſired ſtill to be a ſtranger to you? Is this like one that deſires your ruine? Did God never plead with thee by his Miniſters, and urge the ſame Argument that I do now? Did you never hear ſuch kind of expoſtulations as theſe? Why wilt thou go on to deſpiſe thy God, and to refuſe his love? what reaſon haſt thou to harbour ſuch hard thoughts of him? doth he deſerve ſuch un-

unkindneſs at your hands? How long ye ſimple ones will ye love ſimplicity? why will ye make light of that you can't poſſibly over-value? the favour of God, and acquaintance with thy maker. How oft have you grieved his ſpirit by your unworthy contempts? how many times have you given him cauſe to complain of your unhandſome uſage, when he in very pity and compaſſion came to viſit you: He hath reaſon to ſay now, as well as of old, *Hear O Heavens, and give ear O Earth, for I have nouriſhed and brought up Children, and they have Rebelled againſt me*, Iſa. 1. 2. *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O fooliſh people and unwiſe? Is not he thy Father that bought thee? Hath he not made thee and eſtabliſhed thee?* Deut. 32. 6. *O that they were wiſe. And be inſtructed O Jeruſalem, leſt my Soul depart from thee*, Jer. 6. 8. Is not this the voice of mercy! have not theſe been Expoſtulations of the mighty God with his Rebellious Creatures? and yet how do they ſtand it out all this while, as if God were like to get ſo much by their acquaintance? Return, O fooliſh ſinner, if thou makeſt any thing of Salvation and Damnation, if thou valueſt everlaſting glory, if thou thinkeſt the commands, threatnings, and promiſes of the Almighty to be minded, come away and make no delay. O why wilt thou go on thus madly to undo thy ſelf? come away poor ſoul for all this it is not yet quite to late, thy glaſs is not yet quite run, thy ſoul is not yet fully fixed in its unchangeable ſtate. Once more I make ſuch an offer to thee, as I am ſure none but a mad man will refuſe; ſuch an offer as none of the Kings and Lords of the world can make. The great and mighty Monarch of Heaven tenders thee an Alliance

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vvith himſelf; he ſees hovv far thou art ſpent, hovv poor and lovv thou haſt brought thy ſelf by a dangerous and long vvar againſt thy Maker; he foreſees vvhat a condition thou vvilt be in after a fevv more merry hours, except thou repent and turn. Wherefore in compaſſion to thy precious ſoul he hath commanded us to follovv thee, and not to let thee be at quiet till thou haſt given us a promiſe, that thou vvilt return and humble thy ſelf to thy God; and vvhat, ſhall vve ſtill loſe our labour! ſhall all this come to nothing! O prodigy of unkindneſs! O vvonder of patience! thou haſt ſlighted the friendſhip of thy God, thou haſt ſet light by Chriſt, and undervalued Heaven and Eternity for ten, tvventy, thirty years already, and yet the Lord ſends us once more in his name to ask you vvhether you are vvilling to have God for your Friend; God hath not yet ſaid, *Cut him down, bind him hand and foot, and caſt him into that lake that burns for ever. Bring thoſe mine enemies that would not that I ſhould reign over them, and ſlay them before my Face.* God hath not yet ſpake that dreadful vvord, *Depart.* O vvhat is it thou ſtayeſt for? What is it that makes this buſineſs to hang ſo long? What Lover is it that doth ſo long hold back thy heart? What is the matter that vve can no more ſpeedily and effectually manage this great affair? vvhat is it that thou doſt prefer before God? vvhat is it that thou thinkeſt more vvorthy of thy vvarmeſt love than Chriſt? What is that great thing that thou ſtickeſt not to venture thy ſoul for? Act like a man that is rational and not beſide himſelf. If the World be God, if Earth be better than Chriſt, then chooſe that; if Chriſt be God, then chooſe him. Hovv long

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vvill you ſtand halting betvveen tvvo? love that vvhich vvill laſt longeſt, be acquainted vvith him that is vvilling and able to do moſt for thee. Is the vvorld vvorth more novv than it vvas in *Davids* time, when he preferred the favour of God before thouſands of Gold and Silver? Is the price of it raiſed? Can it bribe death, and ſtop the mouth of Divine Juſtice, and procure thee a real reſpect in another vvorld? Go chaffer and ſee vvhat bargain thou canſt make; tell God that thou vvilt give him thouſands for thy brothers life, and as much more for the Lengthning the leaſe of thy ovvn to Eternity. What doth God ſay? is the bargain made? is it not enough? vvhy, add a vvorld to it, vvill that do? If it vvill not do this, if this purchaſe be too great for thy purſe, then go lovver; can all thou haſt keep thee from fears, get thee a ſtomach, procure thee eaſe, rectifie thy conſtitution; vvill it do this, or vvill it not? if not, vvhy ſhouldſt thou value that vvhich can do ſo little for thee, before that vvhich can do all things for thee? Be perſvvaded at laſt to be vviſe. What is God like to get by your love, or loſe by your hatred? vvhat have you to boaſt of? vvhat excellencies to ſet you out? vvhat portion to advance you, that you ſtand thus upon your tearms? Come, let's hear a little vvhat it is thou thinkeſt ſo highly of thy ſelf for. I am ſure your over-great beauty can't commend you; for a Black-more may vvith better reaſon brag of comelineſs, than ſuch a deformed loathſome creature can of beauty. I am ſure your helpfulneſs vvill not ſpeak for you; for thou art a crazy, decrepid, ſickly creature, that vvill coſt God more to cure thee, than thou art vvorth a thouſand

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times. It can't be for thy Estate that thou art so much desired, for all thy Gold is adulterate, thy Jewels counterfeit, thy All forfeited; and what is it then that thou hast yet to boast of? come and set it before us, that we may acknowledge our mistakes. Are the Cloaths upon thy back (as fine as thou art) thy own? is the Food that thou eatest paid for? And is this the Creature that must be wooed with so much earnestness? Behold all ye inhabitants of the world, and admire! hear, O Heavens! this is that--------(I want a name to call her by) which thinks it below her to be match't to Christ, and an undervaluing to be acquainted with her Maker, and a shame to have God for her Father? From the Crown of the head to the sole of the foot, there is nothing but wounds and bruises, and putrified sores; and running plauge sores that are broken, are her greatest beauty: and her's a thing to belov'd with all my heart! *Ezek.* 16. Whosoever thou art that readest these lines, this was once thy condition, in these ornaments he found thee, when God came to ask thy heart, this was thy dress, though thou art thus highly advanced. And such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are cleansed.

And after all this, O Sinner, art thou still as stout and proud as ever! Is Christ so willing to bring thee to his Father? is he willing to Cloath thee from head to foot with glorious Robes, such a dress as may become thee in the presence of a King? Doth he offer to lead thee in his hands to his own Palace? Is God so willing and desirous to be your Father, and Christ to be your Husband? are all the Ministers of Christ so willing to do their utmost to bring this match to perfection?

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shall they lie at you day and night to give your consent, and to be willing; and are you still unwilling? Well, if all this signifie little, and you miss of Christ at last, and be not acquainted with God after all, remember it was your own doings; and that you thought it greater Wisdom to marry the Servant than the Master, to obey the Rebel rather than your loving Prince. Remember you preferred Darkness before Light, Hell before Heaven. I call Heaven and Earth to Record this day, that I have set Life and Death before you, and you stand as if it were so difficult a matter to resolve which were the best. This sounds strangely, and every one will be ready to write *Fool* upon that mans Forehead that acts thus. Hold man, be not to ready to pass thy Censure before thou look within thee. Dost thou see on absolute need of Christ? Dost thou Adore his infinite love and kindness? Dost thou give up thy self to him for thy Lord, and receive him for better for worse, come on it what will? Or dost thou not rather spend thy thoughts, and let out thy Affections upon the Vanities and Pleasures of the World? Dost thou not Love Father and Mother, Wife and Children, Brethren and Sisters, House and Lands, more than Him? Why, if this be thy case, I must say thou art one of the Fools that loves Death and hatest Life, thou callest that Folly in another, which in thy self thou counteſt Wisdome. I wonder who it is that you strive to please all this while! Is not the hand of *Joab* in all this? Hath not Satan been deep in retarding this Match? Hath not he a design to Marry thee to some painted Lust, though he undoe thee for ever? And must he be pleased rather than

God?

Is it more neceſſary to gratifie him that never yet intended to do any of the Sons of *Adam* any kindneſs, rather than their beſt friends? Come away for ſhame, and let us loſe our breath no longer; and let that time we ſpend in pleading with you for God, be ſpent in ſinging with you, and praiſing God for you, and congratulating your happy acquaintance with God and you, matching to his only Son.

20. But becauſe man is ſo wedded to the world, and dotes upon his luſt, that all the arguments that we can uſe, are moſt commonly unſucceſſful, I ſhall add one more upon this ſort of motives drawn from the qualifications of him whom I would fain have you acquainted with, and that ſhall take in all that can be ſaid on this head, and that is this; Conſider that he is altogether lovely, he is made up of love, goodneſs, and all excellencies; and whatſoever pleaſure, delight and content you find in the Creature, it is tranſcendently in him, he is the cheifeſt of ten thouſands: ask of them that by Faith have ſeen him, inquire of the Spouſe in the *Canticles*, and ask her what is her beloved more than another beloved? what there is in God and Chriſt more than in the world, and ſhe will almoſt wonder, that any one that is rational ſhould ask ſo fooliſh a queſtion; ſhe thinks you might with as much judgment and reaſon have ask'd, what there is in Heaven, more deſirable than in Hell? What is there is in eaſe more than in torments? in Gold and Jewels, more than in droſs; in a living, healthful, beautiful Creature, more than in a ſtinking rotten carcaſe? Did you but ſee his face, you would ſoon think there were ſomething in

him

him more than in another; could you but ſee his eye, your heart would be in a flame: did you but underſtand what it is to be brought into his banqueting-houſe, you would ſay that they are neither fools nor mad-men, that can find in their hearts to ſcorn the beauties and glories of this world in compariſon of one look or ſmile from God; and believe that his love was better than wine, to be preferred infinitely before the greateſt worldly pleaſures, and think that the Virgins had reaſon enough to love him, *Cant.* 1. 4. How high doth the Church run in his commendations? How doth ſhe endeavour to ſet him out to the life, that every one may admire his excellencies, and be taken with his beauties as well as her ſelf; neither doth ſhe fear to loſe him by this, nor indeed is unwilling that others ſhould fall in love with him as well as ſhe, *Cant.* 5. 9, 10, *&c.* She begins firſt with his Face, it is white and ruddy, the moſt exact beauty, ſo that ſhe muſt be blind that is not taken with him, and ſo ſhe goes on as well as ſhe can to ſet him out; but he is ſo infinitely above her commendations, that ſhe wants words to expreſs her ſelf, therefore ſhe ſpeaks one great one, *He is altogether lovely*; and if you will not believe, come and ſee. Do but look upon him by Faith and meditation, contemplate his beauties, and then if you have any thing yet to object, if after you have had a true ſight of him, and have well weighed all, you do not find that there is in him, infinitly more than I can tell you, why then let me bear the blame for ever.

Well, now let us gather up all theſe things together; and if a multitude of arguments, and if weight and reaſon, if vehemency and earneſtneſs may

may prevail; I should have some good hopes that I should not want success in this work, nor you of the acquaintance with God, and everlasting glory. Therefore I say again, if kindness and love be taking, who so sweet and obliging as he? If comfort, joy and pleasure be desirable, who is there, when the Soul is surrounded with a multitude of perplexities that can so much delight, refresh and raise it? If Power, Glory and Majesty, if ability to defend from injuries, and revenge wrongs, might signifie any thing with poor shiftless Creatures; who is there that ever yet prevailed against him? Who ever contended with God and prospered? If vigour, activity and care in all the affairs of his friends, can intice the dull helpless sinner to receive him; who will take more care for, and do no more for them than he? If his humility may engage us, if freedom of access, notwithstanding that infinite distance that is between us and him, signifie any thing as to the commending of him to our acquaintance; where can a poor beggar be more welcome than at the house of this mighty Prince? Can Faithfulness in the greatest straight raise the esteem of a friend? who ever yet trusted him that was deceived? Are riches and wealth taking? Who is there that can give a Kingdom for a portion, a love-token, and give everlasting glory, and Heaven for a joynture, but God? Doth pity in misery, simpathy in suffering, compassion in distress, indear and commend a friend, who is more tender-hearted than he? Are Honours and Preferments such great things? Who is that which will make all his favourites Kings and Priests, and set them upon Thrones, and reward, and commend them

them before the whole World? is suitableness a considerable qualification to make up this match? who so suitable for the soul, a Spirit, as God a Spirit? Who can satisfie its vast and infinite desires, but infinity it self? Have poor simple Creatures that have quite undone themselves by their folly and indiscretion need of a wise Councellor, to wind them out of their sad intricacies? Who is there among the profound Politicians and grave sages of the world to be compared unto him? Doth a dying man that hath a never-dying Soul, that is to pass speedily into an eternal state, lack an ever-dying and immortal Friend, that may stand him in some steed, when all his Relations are dead and rotten? is not God immortal? Are not friends sometimes furthest off from one, when one hath most need of them? Is not he then a friend highly to be prized, who can, who will never be absent? Doth not God fill Heaven and Earth? What think you of a Soul-friend? Is not such a one worth the looking after, who takes care that your Soul to be sure shall not miscarry? Who ever did more for Souls than Christ? will it not be true prudence to make sure of such a friend as we must have for our friend, or we are miserable for ever? and where is such a one to be found, but he that hath the keys of Heaven and Hell? which is most considerable, Time, or Eternity? And whom shall I most value, him that promiseth present pleasures that are lost as soon as felt, or him that will bestow everlasting favours? And are there not at Gods right hand pleasures for evermore? If the trial and experience of so many millions may speak his commendation, will not all that ever knew

God say; truly God is good to *Israel*. Will Gods willingness, desire, and earnestness prevail with you to come to him? What is the substance of the whole Bible? Doth not almost every Chapter speak the desire that God hath to be reconciled to man? if the perfection of all excellencies meeting in one can render him amiable; how can he be slighted, who is altogether lovely? And what say you now, are you resolved, or are you not? Shall the infinite Majesty of Heaven condescend to offer himself to be loved and imbraced by sinful dust? shall God say, I will be thy Father? and shall not the sinner say, I would be thy Child? Why should not the heart of every Apostate rebellious Traytor, that hath forfeited Estate, Life and Soul, leap at such good news, and say, will God for all this lay aside the controversy, and conclude a Peace? Will he receive the Rebel to Mercy? will he open his Doors to his Prodigal? And is there yet any hope? Is it possible that such sins as mine should be forgiven? Can it be conceived that such a Creature as I should be imbraced? what look upon me, will God indeed take me into favour? Yes, thee, behold he calls thee, he offers thee his Son, a Kingdom, a Crown; behold the Father meets, he makes haste to meet his returning Prodigal; Behold the King hath sent to invite thee to the Feast: Nay, he will give thee his only Son in Marriage, the wedding garment is made ready, the Bridegroom is coming, the wheels of his Chariot run apace, the friends of the Bridegroom are come to bid you make ready: up, deck your self, put on your glorious Apparel, make haste, make haste ye Virgins, your companions are ready, all stay for you

God, the Bridegroom is at the Door: Behold he is at the Door, and will you ſtill let him to knock? What! Father, Husband, a Kingdom? What Words are theſe? Wilt thou, O mighty *Jehovah*, be my Father? Wilt thou O bleſſ'd *Jeſus* be my Husband? Shall I have a Kingdom? What, me a Child, a Spouſe for the King of Glory, an Heir of Glory! Grace! Grace! *Amen Hallelujah.* Be it to thy ſervants according to thy Word! But who are we, and what is our fathers houſe, that thou haſt brought us hitherto? And now O Lord God, what ſhall thy ſervant ſay unto thee? For we are filenced with Wonder, and muſt ſit down with Aſtoniſhment, for we cannot utter the leaſt tittle of thy Praiſes? What meaneth the height of this ſtrange love? O that the God of Heaven and Earth ſhould condeſcend to enter into Covenant with his duſt, and to take into his Boſom the viperous Brood, that have often ſpit their venome in his Face! We are not worthy to be as the handmaids to waſh the feet of the ſervants of our Lord? How much leſs to be thy Sons and Heirs, and to be made partakers of all thoſe bleſſ'd Liberties and Priviledges which thou haſt ſetled upon us; But for thy goodneſs ſake, and according to thy own Heart, haſt thou done all theſe great things. *Even ſo Father, becauſe ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight. Wherefore thou art great. O God, for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beſides thee, and what Nation on Earth is like thy people, whom God went to Redeem for a people to himſelf, and to make him a Name, and to do for them great things and Terrible? For thou haſt confirmed them to thy ſelf, to be a People unto thee for ever, and thou Lord, art become their God.* Wonder,

O Heavens, and be moved O Earth, at this great thing! For, behold, the Tabernacle of God is with Men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his People; and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. Be astonished and ravished with Wonder; for the infinite Breach is made up, the Offender is received, and God and Man are reconciled, and a Covenant of Peace entred, and Heaven and Earth are agreed upon the Tearms, and have struck their Hands, and sealed the Indentures! O happy Conclusion! O blessed Conjunction! Shall the Stars dwell with the Dust? Or the wide distant Poles be brought to mutual Embraces and Cohabitation? But here the distance of the Tearms is infinitely greater, *Rejoyce O Angels! shout O Seraphims!* O all the Friends of the Bridegroom and Bride, prepare an *Epithalamium*, be ready with the Marriage-Song. Lo, here is the wonder of Wonders! For *Jehovah* hath betrothed himself for ever to his hopeless Captives, and owns the Marriage before all the World; and is become one with us, and we with Him: He hath bequeathed to us the precious things of the Earth beneath, with the fulness thereof; and hath kept back nothing from us. And now, O Lord, thou art that God, and thy Words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy Servants, and hast left us nothing to ask at thy Hands, but what thou hast already freely granted. Only the Word which thou hast spoken concerning thy Servants, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said, and let thy Name be magnified for ever, saying, *The Lord of Hosts he is the God of Israel. Amen. Hallelujah.* And how do you like this Musick, O ye the lost Sons and Daughters of *Adam*? How do you relish

these

these Dainties? what do you think of this Match? Some you see have been so wise, as with the greatest Gratitude they can for their Souls, to close with those happy offers of Grace. You hear how bravely such and such have bestowed themselves, and now they are made for ever. And what do you say to the same Proposals? Have they so much Reason to bless the day that ever such a Motion was made? Have they cause to rejoyce for ever for those blessed Overtures, or are they all to be slighted by you? Will Christ be worse to you than them? Is Heaven and Happiness less necessary for you than them? Will the loss of a Soul be more inconsiderable to you, than it would have been to them? Will not Heaven, Christ, and Glory, be as well worth your acceptance as theirs? What, are you willing to be shut out when the Bridegroom comes to fetch his Spouse home: Can you bare it, to see such, as you thought your inferiours, advanced, and your self despised? What shall I say? What words shall I use? What shall I do to prevail? O that I could pity you a thousand times more than I do! O that my Eyes might weep in secret for thy Folly! O that you also might do as some have done before you? though indeed they be but few that be so wise? O that you would also bestow your Heart upon Christ! give him your heart-love; or he will have your heart-blood. Do not make your self miserable to please any living: Do not slight Christ, because most do so; go not with them to Hell for company. But that, if it be possible, I might perswade you, I shall add some more motives, to prevail with you to get acquainted with God; which I am certain will either work that

blessed effects, or rise up against you to the aggravation of your Confusion, in that great and terrible Day.

II. HEAD OF MOTIVES.

The next Head of Motives which I shall insist upon, for the inforcing of this Duty of Acquainting your selves with God, I shall take from the glorious Effect of this Acquaintance with God.

1. The first Effect of this Acquaintance with God is, it makes the soul humble, and consequently fits the soul for greater Communications from God still, and to do God the greater Service; but of that particular afterwards. Acquaintance with God, it makes the Soul humble. When God comes into the Soul, he brings such a glorious Light along with him, that he makes the Soul to see, not only his Beauty, but its own deformity, *Psal.* 119. 130. *The entrance of thy Word giveth Light: It giveth Understanding to the simple.* Before the Soul was acquainted with the Word of God, and by that had some discoveries of God made to it out of the Word, why it was in the dark, and saw nothing at all of its own Vileness, it took no notice of that Sink, that Hell that was within it, consider not its own Treason against the Lord of Heaven and Earth, and the dangerous hazards that it did run every moment upon that account; but the Soul thought very well of its own State, it flattered it self in its own iniquity, the man thinks he is Rich and increased in Goods, and hath need of nothing, but when he comes to look into his Purse, to open his Trea-

Treasury, and to tell over all his Gold and Silver in the light, Why then he perceives a sad mistake: All his Silver is Drosse, and the best Riches that he hath is but Dung: When the Light comes in, he sees the Darkness of his Understanding, the perverseness of his Will, the disorderliness of his Affections, the distemper of the whole Soul. He before took himself for a beautiful Creature, but by his Light and this Glass he sees his Beauty is great Deformity, he beholds heaps of Lusts crawling up and down, which before lay undiscerned, and then that man that reckoned himself so happy, cries out, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me? What shall I do to be Saved?* I am undon, undon, how shall I live, where shall I dwell for ever? Time was that the man admired what the Ministers ailed to keep such a stir about sin, but now he wonders that they are no more earnest in their Preaching of it down. It was a little while ago, that he thought himself whole, but now he feels himself sick to the very heart, Wounded, Fainting, and ready to Die; he made full account that he was Pure, but now he cries out unclean, unclean; it was not long since he said with Indignation, am I blind also? But now he cries out, and will not be silenced, have mercy upon me *Jesus*, thou Son of *David*, and grant that I may receive my Sight. His Language is much altered; he cannot say, was ever such a sinner as I pardoned? Will such a Prodigal ever be received? Shall such foul Offences as mine be forgiven? If God should look upon me, and give me a Christ, and pity me, and cast his Skirts over me, while I lie in my Blood; if the Lord should look upon me, it would be such a wonder

that all that ever heard of it may justly admire. Now the man vvhich thought himself the best of Saints, believes himself as bad as the vvorst of sinners! When a man begins to be acquainted with God, he begins also to know himself; He that saw no need of vvashing by Christ, vvould now have Hands, Feet, Head and Heart all VVasht. He that thought himself somtimes far enough from Hell, now begins to admire that he did not fall into it, and although there be a sweet alteration in him for the better, and Saints begin to delight very much in him, yet he vvonders that any one should see any thing in him, that should cause any affection in them towards him, much more to inflame their hearts in such vehement love to him; if he hear of any Reproaches that are cast upon him, he is ready to say vvith that vvise Stoick, (*Epict.*) *If he had known me better, he would have spoke much worse of me. If any praise him, he judgeth that it proceeds from their Ignorance of his weakness, rather than from any knowledge of his Worth; and if he hear any such Language, he is ready to tremble for fear of his own Heart, and cries out, not unto me, not unto me, but unto his Name be the Praise: Yet not I, but Christ which dwelleth in me.* Thus it is with one that begins to have some saving knowledg of God; and the nearer he comes to God, the further he goes from himself; the more he sees of him and his Righteousness, the less he sees of his own; the more he is Exalted, the more he debaseth himself; like those four and twenty Elders, he lays his Crown at the feet of God. Thus it was vvith *Job*, when God, as I may say, stood at a great distance from him, he is ready to speak a little too highly, he stands much upon his

his own Righteouſneſs, he ſtifly juſtifieth himſelf; but when the holy God comes a little nearer to him, when he throws off that dark cloud with which he had mantled himſelf, and when he cauſed that glorious Brightneſs to break forth upon *Job*, and made him to ſee a glance of his Holineſs, Wiſdom and Juſtice, then how is he even aſhamed and confounded within himſelf, that he ſhould ever ſtand ſo much upon his own juſtification, *Job* 42. 5, 6. *I have heard of thee, by the hearing of the Ear: But now mine Eye ſeeth thee. Wherefore I abhor my ſelf, and repent in Duſt and Aſhes.* When he comes to be better acquainted with God, how ſtrangely is his Note changed; and I might ſay, when he was thus abaſed, how ſpeedily doth God raiſe him to a Wonder! A man may hear of God twenty years together, and yet never abhor himſelf with duſt and aſhes, never ſee any vileneſs that is in his Nature, never be brought off from his own Righteouſneſs, never admire that he is kept out of Hell! O but when he comes to ſee God, and to be acquainted with him, how doth he cry out of himſelf as unworthy to breath in the Air, as deſerving nothing but Wrath; then he hath not a word to ſay for the goodneſs of his own Heart, now he can ſay with Aſtoniſhment, O infinit Patience! O unmeaſurable Goodneſs! O the depths of Gods love! He muſt be merciful indeed that can pardon ſuch ſins! That muſt be goodneſs indeed that can be ſo to me! That is love with a witneſs, that can imbrace ſuch a loathſome Monſter! What was it that made *Abraham* call himſelf Duſt and Aſhes? What made *David* to ſay he was a Worm and no man? What made *Iſaiah* ſpeak ſo debaſingly of himſelf; Why theſe were the

Friend-

Friends of God, they had Visions of that holy One. When is it that the People of God are most ingenuous in their Confessions? When do they most freely pour out their Soul before God? when is it that they most readily open their Sores, and desire that they should be searched, but when this great Chyrurgion comes to their Chambers? Those which before were whole, are now sick full of Plague-Sores, Head and Heart sick, dangerously Sick, and no whole part in them; they can say more against themselves now than ever the Minister could; they can aggrvate their Sins, and lay loads upon themselves; and they see themselves Vile, and even are ready to wonder that the Earth did not open and swallow them up before this; they admire that God should indure them so long, and think it no small Miracle that they were not crushed in the Egge, that they were not cast from the darkness of the Womb, to the darkness of Hell. Now they can cry out of Original Sin, and the indisposition of their souls to any thing that is good, and inclination to that which is bad: They say as well as *David, That they were born in sin, and in iniquity did their Mother conceive them*; They think every thing too good for them, all mercy on this side everlasting Misery. They count every bit they Eat, and every drop they Drink, more than they deserve. They think themselves unworthy of the least of Gods Mercies, *Gen.* 32. 10. Others say thanksgivings, but he feels them; others say Confessions, but he feels them. It is one thing for a man to speak of his own unworthiness, and another thing to lie under the sense of it. The heart and Tongue are two distinct Members. The heart may

ſpeak that which the Tongue can't utter, and the Tongue may utter that vvhich the heart never felt. But a man that is brought into acquaintance with God, ſpeaks what he experiences, or rather his experience is greater than he ſpeaks, ſo that he doth not diſſemble with God, when he confeſſeth his ſin before him. They lay themſelves as low as Hell; this is humility, and this is an effect of acquaintance with God. Hence it is that *Paul* ſaith of himſelf, *Eph.* 3. 8. *Unto me who am leſs than the leaſt of all Saints is this Grace given, that I ſhould Preach among the Gentiles the unſearchable Riches of Chriſt; and to make all men ſee what is the fellowſhip, &c.* He wants vvords to expreſs Gods greatneſs, and his own ſmalneſs. Now, vvhat vvas it that made *Paul* ſpeak and think thus of himſelf? There was a time vvhen *Paul* vvould have ſpit in any ones Face that ſhould have ſpoke as much againſt him, as he did againſt himſelf. What is it that hath wrought ſuch a ſtrange alteration in this great *Rabby*, and made him ſo little? Why, this Acquaintance vvith God, the ſight of Chriſt vvas the thing that laid this proud Phariſee in the Duſt, and made him blind alſo. Mark this, always the more heavenly any Man is, the more Humble. See *Exod.* 3. 11. 2 *Sam.* 7. 18. If I ſhould appeal to the experiences of Saints, and ask them, vvhen they had the loweſt thoughts of themſelves; vvould they not ſay, when they were neareſt God? Now, would you vvalk humbly? you muſt vvalk vvith your God; vvould you ſee more of your own Deformity? vvhy then you muſt labour to ſee more of his Holineſs, more of his Beauty. Contraries ſet neer one another, appear more viſible.

2. Another excellent Effect of Acquaintance with God, is, that it will make a man fall upon sin in good earnest. When the soul sees how infinitely good God is, it can't but see an unspeakable evil in sin, which is so directly contrary to him. When the Soul hath really entred into a League with God, it presently bids defiance to all his Enemies; when he begins to be at peace with God, he presently commenceth a War against his Adversaries. Friendship with God makes Enmity against Satan. That which formerly the man rouled under his Tongue as a sweet Morsel, is now like Gall and Wormwood to him. He that sometimes did commit Iniquity with greediness, can now say, that it is the greatest Folly and madness in the World; he knows that it is an evil and a bitter thing, as sweet as it tasted when his Palate was distempered; he that gloried in his Wickedness, now accounts it the greatest shame in the World; and hates the Garments which are bespotted with the Flesh, which sometimes he took for beautful Raiments. The burnt Child Dreads the Fire; Sin hath cost his Friend dear, and him dear too. The Child can't love that Knife which stabb'd his Father. He knows how sweet God is, and how much he hates sin, and that if he would have Gods Company, he must bid an everlasting farwel to his dearest beloved sin; and therefore rather than he will offend so dear a Friend, he will hew *Agag* in pieces before the Lord. He will as soon cut off one Hand with the other, and be pull'd Limb from Limb, as again draw his Sword against his covenanted Friend, and again venture into the Field in the Cause that somtimes he did so deeply engage body and soul

in.

He that thought before that it was no great matter to Damn, Curse, and Tear; but a trick of youth to Whore, and no harm to do what one had a mind to; to Eat and Drink, and Talk, and sleep as one Lists, to give ones Lusts whatsoever it call'd for; he that could once make a mock of sin, and Sleep securely upon the top of a mast, and thought it a piece of Gallantry to dare the Almighty, and was ready to laugh at them which durst not be so Prodigal of their Souls, as himself; the case is now wonderfully altered with him, he now sees the Harlot stript naked, he beholds how loathsome the Whore is, now her Paint is washed off, sin and hell are alike to him; tempt him to folly, and he will soon answer in *Josephs* language, *How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* He that sometimes thought sin the only pleasure, and looked upon the Devil and the world as the only Friends, now sees his dangerous mistake, and blesseth God that his Eyes are opened before he comes into another world; he knows how that holiness is the only pleasure, and God is the only Friend, and sin and the world are as mortal Enemies as the Devil himself; he believes that if he venture upon sin, he must venture upon the displeasure of his Friend, whose favour he sets more store by than all the delights under Heaven, and whose loving kindness he judgeth to be better than Life it self. When the Soul is once acquainted with God, how strangely are it's apprehensions of things altered? Now he calls Things and persons by their right Name; good he calls Good, and evil Evil; whereas before he called evil good, and good evil,

evil, and put light for darkneſs, and darkneſs for Light; he now believes that the zealous compaſſionate Miniſters that ſpoke ſo much againſt ſin, had reaſon enough to have ſaid ten times as much as they did; he ſees that it was not for nothing that they were ſo earneſt with him; he hath taſted the Gall, Wormwood, and poiſon that is in ſin; he plainly ſees what is the great Make-bate between God and Man, he hath now the wit to underſtand what it is that hath kept good things ſo long from him: Tell him now of a Revel, a Whore, he had as live thou ſhouldſt perſwade him to part with his ſtrength and liberty and grind in a Mill, he reckons you might as rationally deſire him to leap into a bottomleſs Pit, to take up his everlaſting lodging in a bed of Flames, and to make light of Damnation. Let Men and Devils uſe what Arguments they will to prevail with him, now to cloſe with temptations, he is ſure he hath a ſtronger againſt them; he hath a ſenſible Argument within, which will anſwer all, If they had ten thouſand times as many more than they can produce: The love of Chriſt makes him abhor the motion; God is my Friend, daſhes all. Shall ſuch a one as I take up Arms againſt God? Shall I that have found him ſo infinitely good? Shall I that have experienced the faithfulneſs of this Friend to me, be ſo infinitely ungrateful, as to be thus abominably unfaithful to him? Shall I that have forfeited my Life, and Soul, and inſtead of Hell have received Heaven, inſtead of Damnation, Salvation, ſhall I inſtead of thankfulneſs again rebel? becauſe the Grace of God abounds, ſhall ſin abound? God forbid. To argue from mercy to ſin is the Devils

logick: To argue from mercy to duty is true Christianity: One that is acquainted with God, can expostulate the case with his own Soul, and say, What meanest thou O my Soul to stand parlying with Satan? Hast thou known what that hath cost thee already? look back to *Eden*. Who was it that dispossessed thy Grand-Father of that brave seat? What did *Eve* get by discoursing with such a Cheater; have you not lost enough already, but you must be venturing still? Was it nothing for God of a friend to become a stranger & Enemy? Was it a slight matter to be divested of all that glory that once thou didst shine in, but that now again after thou art brought into some favour, thou must be tampering with that gamester who had like to have robbed thee of all? Art thou talking of returning again into *Egypt*? What, hast thou so soon forgotten the Iron, and the Clay? Is this all the thanks that you give the Lord for his unspeakable mercy? Doth he that hath done such things for you deserve no better at your hands? Is this your kindness to your friend? What was it O my Soul that that undone Creature said unto thee? Did he say, it is a little one, and thy Soul shall live? What, did he ask a few merry houres that I should spare my self, that I should not be righteous overmuch? Did he so. A special Friend! I thank you for nothing? And why didst thou not answer the Tempter as *Solomon* did *Bathsheba*, when she ask'd a small thing (as she thought) for *Adonijah*? and why dost thou not ask the Kingdom also? And why did not Satan ask thee to part with Heaven, and thy interest in Christ, and those Favours? as the Lord liveth, as small a request as thou thinkst his was,

that

that word was ſpoken againſt thy life, thy ſo
A vertuous Man, or as the Stoick calls him
(*Anton.*) *One that hath God for his Friend, wh*
Temptations are preſented, he remembers who he i
and how he ſtands related to God, and how litt
grateful ſuch an action would be to his Friend. An
thus he doth reſiſt the Temptation with a grea
deal of gallantry, when he remembers himſelf
Nay, ſometimes, Temptations to ſin do mak
Grace more to abound: the water which was in-
tended to cool divine Love, proves Oyl, an
makes that noble flame to burn more vehement-
ly, *Cant.* 8. 6, 7. He deſires to exerciſe that Grac
which is contrary to the vice which he is tempte
to with more than ordinary vigour. He ſtands like
a Rock in the midſt of the ſea unſhaken; he i
ſteadfaſt and unmoveable, like a pillar in the Tem-
ple of his God. He is much of the ſame mind, in
that point, with that brave Heathen, who ſpake
thus to himſelf when Temptation was ſtrong. (*Ar.*
Epict. l. 2. *c.* 18.) *Deliberate man, yield not raſhly,*
'tis a great work that lies upon thy hands, 'tis a di-
vine work, 'tis for a Kingdom, the Kingdom of God.
Now remember thy God, lets ſee what thy love
to thy God is, remember his preſence, he beholds
how thou ſtandeſt deliberating whether thou
ſhouldſt fight for him or againſt him; for ſhame
ſhew not thy ſelf ſo baſely diſingenious: Remem-
ber what thy God, thy Friend, did for thee at ſuch
and ſuch a time: Remember how kindly you were
entertained by him the laſt time you were at his
Houſe. Whoſe ſword tis that you wear by your
ſide? who gave you it? Did not God give it you to
fight againſt his enemies? And will you draw it a-
gainſt himſelf? remember from whence you had all

that

t you do enjoy, and can you find in your art to take Gods mercies, Gold, Silver, and ood, and beſtow them all upon that which he ates? will you quarter and keep in pay with Gods oyn, his greateſt enemy? And if you feel your eart ſtill ſtaggering, and ſcarce able to keep it's round, then remember God ſtands by, Chriſt ooks on, and ſees how gallantly any Champion f his will demean themſelves on his quarrel; nd that there is not a more lovely ſight upon the arth, than to behold one of his Friends, rather enturing their lives than they will bare that the eaſt indignity or affront ſhould be put upon their od! O happy are they that can always act as the ſight of God! and if the Soul can have but conſtant freſh ſence of it's relation to God, and eye, it is impoſſible but that it ſhould hate ſin, hich is ſo directly oppoſite to him: happy are oſe who by the thoughts of God are inraged a-inſt ſin! Is it not enough ſaith that heavenly ul that is acquainted with God, that I have one ſuch and ſuch things againſt God, when I new him not, but that I ſhould again ingage ainſt him after I have been obliged by a thou-nd mercies, after I have taſted and ſeen how od the Lord is? is it a light matter that I did long after fight againſt him then? and ſhall I now new my rebellions, when I have had ſo much perience of the folly and madneſſe of ſuch a war, here I ſhall be as ſurely conquered as I draw ſword? and hath God kept me by a miracle mercy out of Hell, and after I had run out ſo etchedly, and undone my ſelf, ſet me up a-in, after I had plaid the prodigal, received me ain into favour, and ſhall I after all deal thus

bafely by him: No I'le die a thouſand deaths before I will willingly yield to any thing that may be in the leaſt offenſive to him, whom my Soul hath ſuch an infinite reaſon to love above the whole world. The knowledge of Gods ſervice, and Satans too, makes a Soul to diſtinguiſh; he that knows what it is to be made free by Chriſt, abhors his old Maſter, he remembers full well the great hard ſhip that he then underwent, when he had nothing to live upon but Husks, he calls to mind the Clay and Morter, he can't forget the cruel Vaſſalage that he ſerved under; Garlick and Onions were his dainties, and truly he can't deſire to leave his Manna for ſuch kind of Food; he is not in love with the Whip and Scourge, he doth not dote upon the fetters, the Iron which went into his ſoul, but he is glad with all his heart to be free from thoſe Task-maſters, which made him to ſerve with rigour, he hath no mind to return to his old Work: My meaning in all this is, he that was a ſervant and a drudge of Satans, and a ſlave to his luſt, when he once comes to taſte the ſweetneſs of Spiritual liberty, to be made free by Chriſt, he hath no deſire again to be inſlaved, but doth with the greateſt deteſtation, reject all the propoſals and promiſes that the Devil makes, to bring this buſineſs about; he knows Satan too well to love his ſervice, he remembers that all his pay was promiſes, and no more, he remembers that he fed him with poyſon, and made him do that which had like to break his bones, and undone him for ever: he ſees what Satans deſignes were, and what had become of him quickly, if he had gone on in his ſervice; he believes chains to be chains, though they

they be of Gold; believes that poyſon will kill him, though it may be ſweet in the mouth; he hath now ſuch a ſence of the evil and baſeneſs of ſin, as being ſo infinitely loathſome to God, as that he hates it with a perfect hatred; he hath a will in ſome meaſure conformed to the will of God; and what his friend, the Lord loves, he can't hate, and where his God hates he can't love. *Pſal.* 139. 22. *Do not I hate them O Lord which hate thee? and am I not grieved with them which riſe up againſt thee? I hate them with a perfect hatred, I count them mine enemies.* Now what is it that ſtirs the Pſalmiſts choller ſo much? Why, he had been working upon his own heart, in the former part of the Pſalm, the doctrine of Gods omniſciency, and goodneſs, and by meditation upon this ſubject he was brought under a lively ſence of the greatneſs of Divine kindneſs; and while his heart did thus muſe, the fire burnt, his ſoul was in a flame againſt ſin, *verſe* 17. *How precious are thy thoughts unto me O God!* O when the ſoul hath ſweet thoughts of God, will have ſower thoughts of ſin. When ſoul loves God dearly, it can't chuſe but hate entirely. None behold ſuch deformity in ſin, thoſe which behold moſt beauty in God. ence it is that ſome of the people of God have (by all of them which are really acquainted with God are of the ſame mind) counted it more ſirable to leap into the flames, then to venture on a known ſin. It was no untruth in the abſolute poſition, though falſly applyed by *Job's* end, that it is a great wickedneſs to chooſe the leſt ſin before the greateſt ſuffering, *Job* 36. 21. at was it that made *Paul* ſo weary of himſelf?

what burden was it that made his back ſo ake? what pains cauſeth thoſe bittter groans? *Rom.* 7. was it not ſin? and why did not *Paul* groan before as well as then? was it becauſe he then had no ſin at all, or leſs ſin than when he made that bitter complaint? no ſuch matter, but becauſe he had then leſs acquaintance with God. But now he is become acquainted with God, the more he doth abhor himſelf for ſin. He now knows better than he did, his eyes are opened, and he ſees ſin in its colours, and he looks upon it as ſo great an evil, that he doth want words to expreſs the odious nature of it; therefore becauſe he can't find a worſe word, he calls ſin by its own name, *Sinful Sin*; which he thought a more ſignificant Epithete, than if he had called it *Deviliſh Sin*. What makes the children of God to be ſo weary of this world, and ſo deſirous to be upon the wing? why it is becauſe of better acquaintance elſewhere? they know that then they ſhall put off that carrion that now they carry about with them; Sin I mean, which like a dead carcaſe bound to a living, doth now ſtink ſo abominably in their noſtrils; they know that then they ſhall have a ſweeter ſmell, and themſelves alſo ſmell more ſavoury in the noſtrils of God. They know that poverty ſhall be ſwallowed up with riches, want with fulneſs, ſin with holineſs, miſery with happineſs, they have an inheritance, a City, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs, and nothing that is unclean ſhall enter into it; and when they come thither, they know the caſe will be altered with them, and that though now they bear about with them a body of death and ſin, yet then they ſhall have a body as pure, as bright

and

and glorious as the Son, they ſhall be preſented by Chriſt to the Father without ſpot or vvrinkle, or any ſuch thing. He knovvs that as long as he is thus ſullied by his ſin, his great friend vvill not take ſo much pleaſure in his company. *Iſaac* and *Iſhmael*, the Ark and *Dagon*, God and Sin can't dvvell in the ſame heart; therefore he deſires to have leſs of ſins company that he may have more of Gods; none of ſins company, that he may have alvvays Gods company. Obſerve that conſtantly in your ovvn experience and others, thoſe vvhich vvalk moſt cloſe vvith God are moſt tender, as to the matter of ſin; and thoſe vvhich are leſs in converſe vvith God, are more bold in their venturing upon ſin, and after it is committed they have leſs regret. What is the reaſon that one can ſvvallovv any thing almoſt, and another is afraid of the leaſt appearance of evil; he hates the garment ſpotted vvith the fleſh, he is as fearful of cloathing himſelf vvith vvickedneſs, as of putting on the garments of one that hath had the Leproſie or Plague upon him; he hates vain thoughts, becauſe he loves God and his lavvs, *Pſal.* 119. 104, 113.

3. Another glorious effect of Acquaintance vvith God, is, that it makes one to have very lovv and undervaluing thoughts of the vvorld. When the Saint hath been vvith *Paul* raiſed up to the third Heaven, vvhen he hath had ſome intimate converſe vvith God, he can look the vvorld into almoſt nothing; nay, if it ſtand in competition vvith Chriſt, he counts it but as dung and droſs in compariſon of the excellency of the knovvledge of Chriſt Jeſus his Lord, *Phil.* 3. 8. he can then ſet a higher value upon the light of Gods coun-

tenance, then upon Corn, and Wine, and Oyl. It is becauſe that poor Creatures know no better, that they dote ſo much upon the world; did they but know what it is to have one look of love from God, were they but acquainted with the glory of another world, they would ſoon diſreliſh every thing elſe; nothing will down with them which have been feaſted in Gods Houſe, but thoſe Royal dainties. Taſte the world who will, ſaith the Saint, give me but more Grace, more of Chriſts company, let me but maintain an intimate familiarity with God, let me be but better acquainted with him, and be more frequently refreſhed with the ſmiles; this is all that I deſire upon earth, this is all that I expect to make my happineſs compleat in Heaven. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon Earth that I can deſire in compariſon of thee.* It was not without good reaſon that the *Pſalmiſt* prizes the Commands of God above Gold and Silver; it was no miſtake in *Solomon* to count Wiſdom more excellent than the fineſt Gold, and more precious than Rubies. That ſpiritual Merchant knew what he did when he ſold all that he had for that Pearl of great price; he was ſure he ſhould be no loſer by ſuch a bargain. Bring me a heavenly Creature that hath had a view by Faith, of the Glory of Gods countenance, that hath been in his company, that hath been brought into his Banquetting-houſe, ſuch a one I am confident can eaſily ſpare that which moſt keep ſuch a fearful ſtir about, he can ſpare the world for them which are like to have no better a portion. Give him but more of thoſe ſpiritual pleaſures which he hath had in communion with God, and he deſires no more.

He

He can novv ſpeak it, and ſpeak it in good earneſt, that there is no compariſon betvveen this vvorld and another; he can novv call this vvorld a ſhadovv, and the glory of it graſs, and vvrite Vanity, Emptineſs, and Vexation upon its beautiful Face, and contemn all its ſmiles and frovvns, and look upon its greateſt Lovers, as perſons that deſerve to be pittied rather than envied, vvhoſe portion is ſo ſmall, vvhoſe happineſs ſo ſhort, and vvhoſe miſery and miſtake is ſo great and diſmal. It is a common thing for men to declaim againſt the vvorld, and to ſay, it is but a little muck; it's no unuſual thing for its greateſt Lovers to ſpeak againſt it, and ſay, that it is that vvhich paſſeth avvay; but yet for all that they purſue it more than Heaven, and are more earneſt for it, than the Salvation of their Souls, and more troubled at the thought of parting vvith it, than at the thought of their parting vvith God; and the loſs of it troubles them more than if vve tell them of the loſs of their ſouls: Such as theſe vvill not ſay, but that God is infinitely more to be loved than the vvhole vvorld; but yet if the World and God ſtand in competition, they ſtand not long diſputing vvhich muſt give place, the World hath the uppermoſt room in the heart. But vvhence is this miſtake? Hovv comes the Servant to Ride, and the Maſter to go on foot? Why is the vvorld preferred before God? Why hence it is, men knovv not God, they are not acquainted vvith his excellency; the World is ſenſible, he ſees it, he feels it, he taſtes it, and ſo he doth not the things that are inviſible: And no vvonder then, that ſenſe bare the ſvvay; thy man vvants Faith to realize inviſibles, he vvants ſenſes ſpiritually

exercised. But now he that knows God, and is acquainted with spiritual things, he hath quite another apprehension of the World; and that not only from Faith, but sometimes from a spiritual sense, and he can say that Divine Pleasures, Riches, and Enjoyments do as sensibly refresh him, yea, abundantly more than ever the world did. And when he hath been newly taking a walk in that heavenly Paradise, he looks back upon this World with grief and indignation, that he should ever love the world with his heart, when there was one that did infinitely more deserve his love, when there was a God, Christ, and Holiness to be loved; that he should be such a child, such a fool as to run after Butterflies, quarrel for a feather, hunt for a shadow, while God, Christ, and Glory, those great Substances lay by unregarded. Now he grudges that any thing should have his love but his God; his dearest Relations, if they stand in Gods way, must be run over, despised, hated. That which the men of the world fight, and kill, and spare not to damn their souls for, he sees now to be a pitiful worthless thing, which can't defer Death a Moment, nor stand him in any stead in another world. He is all for that coyn which will go currant in another Country; and if he be but rich in promises, rich in spiritual relations, rich in grace, he takes himself for no unhappy man; let the world speak or think what they will of him, he doth not much pass upon it, he believes that he is but a pilgrim and stranger here, and if he meet with no great kindness, it is but that which he expected. The truth of it is, he is almost afraid of the smiles of the world, not being ignorant of this,

that

that whom it kiſſes, it intends to betray; he can't be overfond of that which in all probability will keep God and him at a greater diſtance, and make his paſſage to glory next to impoſſible. He reckons that it's better being rich in grace, than rich in purſe; and that he which lays up for his body, and provides not for his ſoul, is the greateſt fool in the world. Tell ſuch a one as *Moſes* of riches, honours, and preferments, he thinks them but poor ſorry things for a man of *Iſrael* to be taken with, and he will rather ſee them in the dirt, than part company with his ſuffering brethren, much leſs with God. It is ſtoried of *Anaxagoras*, that he ſeemed to be very little concerned when his countrey was in a flame; upon which being taxed by ſome, he made this reply, *There is none of you all care more for your country than I do for mine*; pointing with his finger up to heaven. Thus it is with the people of God; let others talk of Riches and Honour, but there is none of them all do value true Riches as they do; but here's the difference, one thinks he hath Riches when he hath the command of a great deal of Gold and Silver; the other knows, he hath Riches when he hath Chriſt, and Grace, and can have good returns out of that other World. And which of theſe are the wiſeſt will ere long be ſeen. One looks upon heaven and glory as a ſhadow, a fable; and the things of this World, as the only realities; the other he looks upon Heaven, God and Eternity, as the greateſt realities, and moſt worthy of his higheſt valuation, and the things of this world as flying ſhadows, which can't fill the arms of him that doth imbrace them: And under this apprehenſion, and

ſence of things, no marvel that he doth preſer the ſubſtance before the ſhadow. He believes with that Worthy, that he was born for other things than to eat and drink, and ſleep, or to take his pleaſure, or to get an eſtate; he knows that the buſineſs in this world, is to provide for another, to get his peace made with God, to contemplate Heaven, and to get thither; and therefore you muſt not count it ſtrange, that ſuch a perſon as this is ſomewhat cold, and remiſs in his carrying on of lower deſigns; he knows that the diſproportion between Finite and Infinite, Times and Eternity, is no ſuch inconſiderable one as the moſt count upon. Again, he hath more than once experienced this, that the very joys and comforts that are to be had in the enjoying of Communion with God, even in this world, are unſpeakably more intence and refreſhing, than the higheſt ſenſual pleaſures in the world. One that is acquainted with God, will take the word of his Friend for true, which word tells him that whatſoever is preſented to his ſence, the world and all that is therein, muſt ere long be burnt up, whereupon he thinks it no imprudence at all to hazard preſent injoyments for future hopes; no folly to look after ſomething that will bear the flame. He thinks it ſcarce worth the while to be born to poſſeſs, if it were a whole world, except he were ſure of having ſomething after it that were better than what he met with here; he had rather have one ſmile from his friend, than thouſands of Gold and Silver: he would not for a world be to have his portion here, though it be never ſo large a one: he had rather by far be with *Lazarus* upon a dunghil, than ſit with *Dives* in a chair of State,

ſtate, before the richeſt fare that the Sea, or Air, or Earth could afford him: he would not change conditions with thoſe which enjoy the moſt of the things of this world: he can thankfully want that which moſt commonly makes its poſſeſſors miſerable. O could you but talk with a man that lives in Heaven while he is upon earth, and could you but ſee and here how much he ſlights that which you adore! Give me neither poverty nor riches, but Food convenient for me is the higheſt that he dare pray for: He had rather live in a ſmoaking Cottage, and have God for his companion, than dwell in the greateſt palace, and have the Devil for his Neighbour, Counſellor, and Maſter. When a man hath been in Heaven by contemplation, though his body be upon the Earth, yet the beſt part of him, his affection, his love, joy, and heart, is ſtill there. *Sen. Ep.* 41. *One that doth converſe with God here, he is indeed that earthly lump, his body is below; but cold you ſee his thoughts, could you look into his heart, and ſee the inward actings of his ſoul, you ſhould ſee the man out of the world diſcourſing with God, he ſticks cloſe to the company of his Friend: He is like the Sun-beams, who though they reach the earth, yet they ſtill abide there from whence they are ſent, and are moſt intenſly hot neareſt the fountain, the Sun.* So the ſoul and thoughts of a child of God, they may, nay, they can't but glance upon the world: but it's moſt vigorous ſpriteful actings are towards God, and the heat of its affections are abundantly more remiſs and cold when they beat upon earthly objects. He that knows what it is to have the company of God, is almoſt ready to wonder how any one can be content with any thing below God: and as for himſelf,

himſelf, he takes himſelf for little better than a priſoner, while his ſoul is pent up in a body which is ſo unwildely as to all ſpiritual employments, till it be refined by the grave. He would not be to dwell here for ever for a world, though he might enjoy more content than ever any ſince the fall did. A Soul acquainted with God is a noble Creature indeed, it ſcorns petty low things, it thinks no Eſtate big enough for it, but that which is infinite; he looks upon himſelf as a Citizen of no mean City, a Denizen of *Zion*, a Free-man of the *New Jeruſalem*, one of the Royal Society, over which Chriſt, that King of Glory, is the Preſident, his inheritance is greater than that which the Sun compaſſeth in its courſe. O when (ſaith ſuch a one) ſhall I leave theſe Cities of *Cabul*, and dwel with the King at *Jeruſalem*! O when ſhall my ſoul be ſafely ark'd! O when ſhall I be upon the wing for Heaven! O when ſhall I leave this body there whence it firſt came! When ſhall I go out of this cell, this cage! O that I were once ſafe in Heaven! O that I were in the immediate preſence of God, and might ſtand for ever before him, and have his bleſſed ſociety for ever and ever. Neither am I now quite without him; but how little, O how little is it that now I enjoy! O when ſhall I enter into the poſſeſſion of that better longer life! I ſtay and long for that ſeparating, or rather uniting hour, which will ſeparate my ſoul from my body, from my droſs, but perfectly unite me to God. Look then O my Soul, upon all that thou ſeeſt below, but as ſo many Inns and reſting-places for a Pilgrim to take ſome little refreſhment in, and then to be gone. That day, O my fearful

Soul,

Soul, which thou ſometimes feareſt as my laſt, is the birth day of eternity. O what mean we to love our priſons, fetters, burdens? What ail we to be ſo much pleaſed with our miſeries, and afraid of our happineſs? O this unbelief! O were Chriſtians but more in the company of God by Faith and Meditation, they would look upon God as great, and the world as a very ſmall thing. He that knows God to be great, ſees every thing below him little. It is an infallible argument of a Divine and Excellent Soul, and one that hath Acquaintance with God, when he can judge all beneath God, as low, ſordid, baſe, and utterly unworthy of the reſpect of his ſoul.

4. Another glorious effect of acquaintance with God, is, that it will eaſe us of all ſorrows, or cure all ſorrows. As ſoon as any one hath but a ſaving knowledge of Chriſt, he is in ſuch a condition as that he need not trouble his head with care, nor his heart with fear; no more than a rich Heir that hath a tender-hearted, loving, wiſe Father, need not trouble himſelf what he ſhall do for bread and cloathing: as long as the great cauſe of fear is taken away, ſo long he is well enough. As for thoſe that are unacquainted with God, they either are always afraid, or have cauſe alwayes to be afraid: but as for a Child of God, that Scripture buoys up his Soul under the mightieſt wayes of fear, *There is no condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus, Rom.* 8. 1. He that is in Covenant with God, may in this world undergo ſome pretty injuries, ſome inſurrection may be made againſt him; but this is his comfort, he is ſure never to be quite over-powered, never to be finally conquered! O the diſquietments and

fears

fears that ſtrangers and enemies are compaſſed with, or will be! And O the joys, the ſecurity, the true ſecurity that ſome have; at what a rate do they live! and how bravely do they die! mark the perfect, and behold the upright man; for the end of that man is peace. This was touched upon before, when I opened the nature and qualifications of this friend, and therefore I need ſay the leſs here; yet it being the great inquiry of the wiſeſt, how they may be ſheltered from this ſtorm; What ſhall they do to be cured of theſe heart-qualms? how they may be freed from fears? I ſhall not altogether paſs it over in this place. I can't but incourage poor ſtrangers, as they value the trueſt comforts, as they would be free from fear and trembling when the Foundations of the Earth ſhall be ſhaken, when the Mountains ſhall tremble, and melt at the preſence of God, the mighty God of *Jacob*, when the Heaven ſhall be rouled together as a Scroul, and be all of a Flame. Make ſure of this Friend! it is impoſſible that one that hath ſuch a one for his friend ſhould much be daunted, when he hears of Wars, and Rumors of Wars, when the Peſtilence rages, when there are dreadful Earth-quakes in ſundry places, and ſuch diſtreſs of Nations and perplexities, that the ſtouteſt heart ſhall ſink that hath not this to ſupport: Then a Child of God may lift up his head with comfort, becauſe his redemption draweth near. There is a vaſt difference between a godly man and a wicked, as to their affections, fears, joys, deſires, hope. The godly thinks long for that, which the wicked wiſhes withall his heart might never be; the Day of Judgement. The righteous

righteous man is even delighted with the forethoughts of that, the thoughts of which doth put a damp upon all the comforts of the ungodly, he rejoyceth in that which makes his Neighbour to tremble. As for death, a gracious heart that hath kept his watch, and maintained a ſweet and conſtant Correſpondency with God, and hath had his heart in heaven, and can look upon the great *Jehovah* as his friend, can't be very much affrighted at his approach: He is not much appaled, when he looks out at the window, and ſees this meſſenger making haſt to his houſe; and when he knocks at his door he dares let him in, and can heartily bid him welcome; he underſtands whence he comes, and what his errand is, and though he look ſomewhat grimly, yet as long as he comes to conduct him to his friends houſe, he can diſpence with that: he hath more reaſon to ſpeak it than he which did. (*Plotinus*) *Let me make haſte away to my Country; there are my excellent Anceſtors, there dwell my noble Relations, there is the conſtant reſidence of my deareſt Friends.* (Tull.) *O happy will that day be when I ſhall come into that glorious aſſembly, when I ſhall have better company than* Homer, Orpheus, Socrates, Cato, *when I ſhall ſit down with* Abraham, Iſaac, & Jacob, *in the Palace of their Friend and mine! O happy day when I ſhall come to my Fathers houſe, to that general Aſſembly, the Church of the Firſtborn, to an innumerable company of Angels, to Jeſus, the Mediator of thy New-Covenant, and to the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect.* A mans knowledge of other things may add to his fears, and make his miſeries greater: But the more knowledge we have of God, the leſs our fears and ſorrows muſt needs be: and when our knowledge

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of God is perfect, all our fears and sorrow shall be for ever blown over. I can't omit a brave speech of that noble Stoick which comes to my mind, *Ar. Epict. l. 1. c. 7.* (*If the acquaintance and favour of* Cæsar *can keep you* (*as you are made to believe*) *from some fears? how much rather to have God for your Father and Friend? how little cause have such to be afraid at any time of any thing, Death it self is not evil to a friend of God: he may say, come, let us go quickly to our Fathers house, our Father calls us.* And doth this seem a small matter to you; believe it, when you come to dye, you will be of another mind then; you will think that's a cordial worth any mony, that will raise your spirits at such a time, and make you with a smiling countenance, to passe into an everlasting state. It is but a folly, to expect that any thing in the world should do this for us but the knowledge of our interest in God. It's possible indeed to get some stupifying intoxicating stuff, that makes a man to dye like a beast, without any great horror, the Devils shop will furnish poor dying Creatures with enough of that; Nay, he is glad if he can keep men a sleep till death awaken them; but miserable is that man who is beholding to the Devil for his Cordials; miserable is he who hath nothing to keep him from a Hell upon Earth, but his own ignorance, and the Devils word. I promise you, 'tis none of the joyfullest spectacles to an inlightned Soul, to look upon one that lived wickedly, and died peaceably. You would think, that a poor man, that is going to Execution, had little cause to smile, though he should Ride to the Gallows upon an easie going Horse, or in a Coach. The Swine is usually very still, when the Butcher is

scraping

scraping away the hair of his Throat in order to the Sticking of him. It's no unusual thing for a vile unsanctified sinner, to leap with a mad confidence into Eternity; but he alone hath a solid peace, who hath God for his friend. This is the only man hath just cause to sing for joy, when his Soul is going into another world. It was none of the worst counsel which he gave, whosoever he was who said, that it doth highly concern us seriously to think of terrible things, which we must most certainly see ere long, and to lay in such provision as may make us fit to grapple with them when they come. O for that which will keep us from crying out hereafter? What shall I do? wo is me, I am undone: were it so that there were such rare extraction to be made which would certainly prolong our lives as long as we would, and make us always cheerful, what striving would their be to get such a receipt? O how would the great ones bring out their bags to purchase it at any rate? How willingly would they morgage all their Lands, part with their richest Jewels to buy it! & yet how little will they expend for that, which if they had, would prove far more effectual! O would men and women but understand themselves, and mind their business, what sweet lives might they lead! what a calm might there be constantly upon their Spirits! How cheerfully might they live! And how joyfully might they dye! *Tully* saith, that he and many others had been gathering the most powerful herbs that they could find to cure all fears; but, saith he, *I know not what is the matter, the disease is still stronger than the remedy.* And dost thou not know, O *Tully*, what's the matter? why then I

will tell thee, One principal Ingredient was left out, *viz.*, Faith in the Blood of Christ, and Union with God by vertue of that Blood. He that is by Christ brought acquainted with God, need not much fear griefs, sorrows, and such things Christ was acquainted with for him; he hath unsting'd Death, and sweetned the Grave: all his troubles are now but as Physick, the Poyson of them is corrected; though the Pill be btiter, yet it's of his Friends composing, and therefore you may take it without any turning away of your head. *Shew me a man* (said old *Epictetus*) *that is happy truly in his life, and happy in his death, happy in his health, and in his sickness; happy when poor, scorned, tormented and banished; in a word, happy in all conditions.* O that I could but talk with such a man! O that I could see such a spectacle! Such a one as my eyes never yet beheld! Why, I will tell thee the reason of it, O *Epictetus*, It is because thou never sawest a Christian, one that was acquainted with God; for let me tell the world, *Through Grace I have seen such a sight, and do believe it to be the most lovely sight on this side Heaven.* I have seen, one smiling when his Jaws have been falling, and eye-strings breaking; rejoycing, when most about him were weeping, and accounting it a high act of patience to be willing to live; and how do you like such a condition? Is it better to lie quivering, shaking, and groaning, or rejoycing and praysing and admiring of free grace, and setting forth the riches of Gods love, and goodness? which of these would you chuse? I can easily believe that few are so bad, but that they could be contented as well as *Balaam* to dye the death of the righteous, and to have their latter

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end like his? But would you dye joyfully? Why then, you must live holily; get acquainted with God, and then this may be your state. I remember *Seneca* speaks of one *Pacuvius*, who when he was drunk cry'd out *Bixi* (*I have been alive*) very merrily. But had he well understood himself, he would have thought he had had much better reason to have cryed out, *I am dead, I am dead*. But however, what he said ungroundedly and wickedly, a Child of God may easily and thankfully say; when he is going to his last sleep, he may with joy and cheerfulness say, I have lived, and through grace, I have kept a fair correspondency with my God, my Friend, whom I am now going to dwell with for ever. Do not think therefore that I come to take away your comforts and joys, when I come to perswade you to get acquaintance with God, no such matter, I would have you learn to rejoyce, but yet I would that that joy should be born from above, that the foundation of it should be the knowledg of your interest in Gods love. Other joys may make you have a smiling countenance, but they do not raise and fill the Soul; for I must tell you, I am far from thinking that every one that laughs, is joyful, and without fears; Give me a man that knows that God is his portion, and Heaven his inheritance, that knows with what Friend, and in what a happy state he shall live in after Death; this, this is the cheerful man: Such a one as this is can overlook momentany sorrows, he understands full well that the case will be quickly altered with him; and the thoughs of Eternal happiness do swallow up his temporal miseries: Tell one of Gods acquaintance, of po-

verty, he values it not, as long as he knows he hath a brave eſtate that can't be confiſcated, Riches that none can take from him, a treaſure that thieves can't break through to, and ſteal; As for all worldly things, he knows that before a few years are over, he muſt part with them however; he is of that mans mind, who having a conſiderable ſum of money, and precious Jewels hid in his ſaddle, and a little odd mony in his pocket, was ſet upon by Thieves; who readily went to his pocket, and took what was there, and look't no further: Now the man ſcaping clear with his main treaſure, is ſo joyful that he takes no notice of what was ſtoln from him. Thus a child of God, if he loſe his eſtate, his liberty, and all his outward injoyments, he counts all theſe but inconſiderable, as long as his Soul is ſafe, his great treaſure is out of their reach. Tell him of Torments, Racks, Flames, or what the policy of Hell can invent, he is not ignorant of this, that the more he ſuffers for Chriſts ſake, the greater cauſe he hath to rejoyce, to be exceeding glad, for great ſhall be his reward in Heaven, and while they add to his ſufferings, they add to his glory; and, though againſt their will, while they would injure him, they do him the greateſt kindneſs; this light affliction works for him, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. As long as his torments want that dreadful Epithite, *Eternal*, he doth not much paſs; the thoughts of Gods love makes mans hatred inconſiderable; O how ſweet are the thoughts of his Friend; when his enemies are moſt bitter? Bleſſed be God, as for thoſe intolerable torments, he knows it's beyond mans power, and far from Gods will to inflict

inflict them upon him, and ſo long he cares not much. All other tortures are but a Flea-bite to the pains of Hell, and an enraged Conſcience; he can almoſt dare the World and the Devil to do their worſt, as being confident of this, that as long as he is dear to God, his Soul is out of their reach. Threaten him with baniſhment, he remembers, that he hath a Friend that will find him out, and bear him company whereſoever he is. Tell him of the barbarous unkindneſs and treachery of former Friends; he reads that his betters have been worſe handled by their pretended Friends; above all, this cheers him, to think that all his Friends will not ſerve him ſo, he hath one Friend that will never forſake him, never be unfaithful to him. Now bring a wicked man upon Earth, that is vvithout his ſorrows, I know there is none, no not one; there is none of them all, but if he were within the ſight of thoſe devouring flames, would tremble. Thoſe that have wickedneſs enough to dare God, will not have courage enough to look him in the face, when he ſhall appear in flaming fire, to execute vengeance upon the ungodly; he that will not now be troubled at the doing of wickedneſs, will be troubled hereafter at the ſuffering for it. Let ſinners ſay what they will, I am ſure they can't be long without fears, to behold Chriſt, and his dear Servants coming together in the Clouds with Millions of mighty Angels to judge the world; I am confident it will be ſuch an amazing ſight as can't chooſe but cool their courage, and make the ſtouteſt heart of them all to ake; I am ſure that as light as they make of Damnation, and Gods diſpleaſure, that the day

is coming when they will believe it was no ſuch cowardize to be afraid of an angry God, to fly from the wrath to come, and to run away from ſo formidable an enemy as Sin. So that it's clear, that a wicked man will firſt or laſt be a fearful man, a *Magor miſſakib*, *Fear on every ſide*, ſhall be his name. But now he that doth exceedingly fear to offend God, need not exceedingly to fear any thing elſe; and he that fears not God, hath cauſe enough to fear every thing? O Sirs, it's a brave thing to be able to take death cheerfully by the hand, and to walk with him joyfully into another world; and this I ſay again, a man acquainted with God may do; he hath this to comfort him, death doth more properly give him life, than take it away from him; and that as ſoon as he is dead his ſin ſhall dye too, and his grace live and act without controul; then he ſhall live a life of joy, a life of perfect holineſs, ſuch a life as Saints and Angels live, ſuch a life as Chriſt lives, the life of God, a life without death, an everlaſting life; and why then ſhould he be afraid of dying? As for his old Companion the body, it is gone to reſt, and will ere long be awakened, and riſe from his bed more vigorous and fit for thoſe Noble imployments which it muſt be engaged in for ever: And Soul and Body, ſhall meet with more comfort, than now they part vvith pain, vvhen the body ſhall be in another kind of dreſs than now it vvears, and that alſo ſhall in ſome reſpects be like the Soul; Agile, Holy, Immortal. This is ſuch a man that I can call happy, and ſo ere long will thoſe that now ſcorn and perſecute him, call him too. Bleſſed is he that in his life is holy, and cheerful, but moſt cheerful and perfect at his death

death. This is the happy portion of Gods acquaintance, this is the Heritage of the Friends of the Bridgroom. I have read of a wiſe man, that would commend, and be thankful for every thing, becauſe he vvas ſure a Friend of his had the management of every thing, vvhoſe underſtanding was infinite, and vvhoſe Wiſdome was unſearchable, vvho could and vvould vvork his own Honour and his Friends Comforts out of every thing, yea, though ſeemingly evil; for the greater the evil ſeems to be, the greater vvill be the real kindneſs which makes ſo much good out of it. O but I have lately loſt many of my moſt neer and precious Relations? If thou art one of Gods Friends, let me tell thee for thy Comfort, you will meet them at your Friends Houſe, vvhen you come thither. It was no unſuitable Advice that he gave to his Friend *Lucilius*, to chear him up after the loſs of a dear Friend. Let us conſider my dear *Lucilius*, that vve our ſelves ſhould be glad to be in that place, and to enjoy that company, vvhich you are ſo ſad that your Friend is gone to; and he that you ſay is loſt, is not ſo, but happy before you. We do not judge rightly of things. Well then, vvould you knovv vvhat a man is? vvould you paſs a true eſtimate of him, and underſtand his Worth and Value? Why then conſider the man vvithout his Riches, lay aſide his Honours, take avvay all his Externals from him; Nay further, lets ſee the man naked out of his Body, and how doth the Soul look? Is it novv Rich, Beautiful, joyful? Can it ſtand confidently before God? Doth it appear cheerfully in the preſence of it's Maker? Why, this is ſomething; it matters not much vvhether his body vvere fed

with Pulse or Dainties, clothed with Rags or Scarlet, it matters not whether his Soul went out of his mouth, or at a wound, whether he dyed in bed of down, or in flames. Methinks by this time you should be ready to think that Religion is an excellent thing, that Gods acquaintance is desirable, and that no life is like the life of a Christian, all whose sorrows end in joys, whose miseries makes him more happy, whose shame for Christ will make for his glory; In a word, whose death brings him into life. *This is the generation of them that seek thee, that seek thy face, O Jacob.*

5. Another effect of acquaintance with God, is, That it will make us more highly to honour him. Here familiarity is far from breeding contempt. Those that are strangers to God see not his worth and Excellency, they honour him not, but they have the most vile, low, contemptible thoughts of the infinitely glorious Majesty, and they think any thing will serve his turn, they make more bold with him than they would do with a man like themselves, they put him off with the leavings of the world: When they have been feeding their lusts, and serving their pleasures, and gratifying the Devil all the day long, then they come between sleep and awake, and pretend a great deal of love to him, and anger with themselves for their sin, whereas God knows, they do but play the hypocrites in all they do, and mean nothing that they say: Lip-devotion, knee-Religion God shall have, and but a little of that too, and that pitiful stuff that they present him with, they think God is very much beholding to them for. As for the sanctifying the Lord God

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in their hearts; as for inward hearty love, as for high prizings and admirings of God; as for a real honouring of God, and worſhipping of him in Spirit, and in Truth, it is that which they underſtand not; and as for them which do, they Laugh at them, as if they were guilty of the greateſt folly in the world. But now he which converſeth with God, beholds ſuch a beauty, excellency, Majeſty, and glory in him, that it is ready quite to ſwallow up his ſoul; he ſpeaks much of God, but yet he thinks more; he wonders that a God of ſuch infinite goodneſs ſhould be no more loved, that a God of ſuch infinite greatneſs, juſtice and holineſs ſhould be no more feared, that a God of ſuch unſpeakable power ſhould be no more obeyed; and while he remembers his own contempt of God in former times, and the too mean thoughts that he hath at preſent of him, he doth even ſtand aſtoniſhed to think that he ſhould be on this ſide the ſtate of the damned. He that before thought every thing too much for God, now thinks nothing enough for him. The man is ſtrangely changed by his new acquaintance, ſo that he may not improperly be called a *New man*, all things are new with him. In honor to this new gueſt, he hath got on new cloaths, he is clad with Righteouſneſs, as with a garment: new food, it is his meat and drink to do the will of his Father which is in Heaven; new drink, Wine on the Lees well refined, he draws all out of thoſe wells of Conſolation, the Promiſes: he hath new thoughts, words, and actions; God, inviſibles, and all the things of faith are now Subſtances with him. Now the threats or promiſes of a God are not counted ſmall matters;

Heaven

Heaven, Hell, and Eternity go for the greatest Realities, becauſe God ſaith they are ſuch. So he that ſomtimes lived vvithout God in the World, had no reſpect at all to his Glory, but valued himſelf and his moſt baſe Luſt, and the Devil himſelf before God, doth now reſpect Gods Glory in all that he doth, he ventures upon nothing deliberately, but vvhat may pleaſe him; Religion runs through all he doth; He eats, he drinks, and ſleeps, and cloaths himſelf; he prayes, he works, he recreates himſelf with a deſign for God. The grand project he ſtill is carrying on, is the honour of God. He will undertake nothing of importance, before he conſult with, and hath the advice and direction of his Friend. Whatſoever he hath that is worth any thing, he ſends it to this Friend, he preſents him with his firſt Fruits, he ſacrificeth his Male, the beſt of his flock; deſires that his Friend may be always at his Houſe, and that he may have the beſt entertainment that he can poſſibly give; and he is aſhamed at the beſt, that he can make him no more vvelcome, vvhom he ſo highly Honours; he is grieved that his entertainment is no better; he would fain give God his firſt and laſt thoughts, his vvarmeſt Affections; he would gladly have the ſtrength and vigor of body and ſoul ſpent in his ſervice; he ſtudies how to improve all Mercies and Enjoyments for God, to take hold of all opportunities that he can poſſibly, and to make the beſt of them for the promoting that grand Deſign which he hath on foot, his Honour; He thinks not Wife and Children, Houſes and Lands, Body, Soul, and all that he can make in the World, too good for him. Whatever Temptations he

conquers,

conquers, vvhatſoever ſin he Slayes, vvhatſoever piece of gallantry or provveſs he hath done in his inroads upon Satans Kingdom, he gives the Honour of all to the Valor, Conduct, and Aſſiſtance of this his Noble Ally and Friend. He ſets the Crovvn of the King of *Ammon*, like *Joab* upon the Head of this King *David*. He hath ſuch a high eſteem for God, that he thinks nothing vvell done but vvhen it is done exactly as he vvould have it; he thinks every thing then beſt, vvhen it is done according to Gods Will: And he counts it no ſmall vveakneſs to be unvvilling that infinit Wiſdom rather than Folly ſhould have the managing of all the Affairs of the World. He deſires to maintain a quick and lively Senſe of the Divine Majeſty upon his Soul, and that he may here and hereafter give him, as he hath infinite cauſe, all Honour, Glory, and Praiſe.

6. Another effect of this Acquaintance vvith God is this, It vvould put abundance of life and Vigour into the Soul; it vvould, as it vvere, oyl the Wheels, and ſet them a running. There are none in the vvorld that Act at ſo high a rate as thoſe do, vvhich are moſt acquainted vvith God. O hovv undefatigable are they in their Pains! vvith vvhat earneſtneſs and faith do they Pray! as if they ſavv the glorious God, before them, and vvere talking vvith him; vvith vvhat Reverence, Seriouſneſs and Delight do they Read, Meditate, and hear the Word, and do all that they do! They knovv in ſome meaſure vvhat it is to preſent their Bodies and Souls as a living Sacrifice to God through Chriſt; they underſtand vvhat it means to be fervent in Spirit ſerving the Lord; they vvill not ſerve God vvith that vvhich coſt them

them nothing, kneeling dovvn, and saying a few formal vvords before God in the evening, repeating the Lords Prayer, and the Creed, and the Ten Commandments between sleeping and waking, doing no body any vvrong, and the like, is not enough to serve his turn, his conscience vvill not be thus put off; but he labours vvith all his might to stir up his soul to lay hold upon God, he is not content to go off from his knees vvithout his Fathers blessing. This is the friend and Acquaintance of God, this is the brave *Israelite*, that spiritual Prince that vvill not let God go till he hath prevailed vvith him. He doth not go to his vvork, as if he cared not vvhether he vvork'd or no; he is not sick of the service of God, but he rejoyceth and vvorks righteousness; his vvork is his pleasure, and he goes on merrily vvith his business. Those that are intimately acquainted vvith God, are not so cold, faint, and dull in the service of God, as others be. Such a one as knovvs God very vvell, and hath been oft made vvelcome by him; vvhy, he comes vvith a great deal of confidence, and knocks at Gods door, and, for his part, he will not go avvay, though the door be not presently opened; but he continues knocking, because he is sure that his Friend is vvithin; he knovvs that he is never from home, and that he can never come unseasonably to him. He comes to Prayer as if he vvere going to storm Heaven, he gets spiritual things by violence, he comes to Duty as to fight for a Crovvn, he is ashamed to offer the lame and the blind to God, but he chooseth for him the best in his flock; he desires to improve his interest in God to the height, this favourite of Heaven comes frequently to the

King

King to beg ſome great thing or other; and he is ſure that his Friend will deny him nothing, that it is not a greater kindneſs to deny than give; he knows that his King hath a large purſe, and as large a heart, and he is not willing to loſe ſuch excellent things that are to be had for the asking for; he is not ignorant that ſpiritual things are worth the ſeeking for, and therefore he will ſeek and ſeek earneſtly; he hath tried more than once, and he remembers to his joy, that wonderful things are to be had, if we will but take pains for them, and prefer our Petitions, or rather get them preferr'd by that great Maſter of Requeſts, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and follow our buſineſs cloſe, that it can't poſſibly miſcarry let it be what it will; the comfort in enjoying will abundantly pay all the charges we can be at in ſeeking; therefore he layes about him as one that is in good earneſt; the confidence that he hath in the good will of God, it puts life into all his petitions. A poor Creature that very rarely injoys any communion with God, that is very little or not at all acquainted with him, is ready to take up with a few formal complemental performances, he is weary of his work before he hath well begun it, he is quickly out of breath; but now one that is very well acquainted with God, is not ſo ſoon weary of his company; it may be, he may be ſomewhat cold when he ſets out, but by that time he hath gone a few turns with his Friend, his blood grows warm, he is ſometimes ſo taken up with God in duty, that he can ſcarce tell when to have done? O he thinks it's good being there? O it was a ſweet ſeaſon! Theſe are the actings and experiences of

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some noble Souls. I have heard some Christians say, that had not God made it their duty to follow their callings, they could be glad with all their hearts to do nothing else, day nor night, but hear the mysteries of Gods love in Christ opened; Read, Pray, Meditate, and be immediately engaged in the Service of God. Sure something is the matter with these persons more than Ordinary, that their Palate should be so Spiritualized, as that it is their Food, their Wine, their Dainties, to be actually imployed in the great acts of Religion. The more any one is acquainted with God, the more delight he takes in the Ordinances of God, as one of Gods Children, he desires the sincere milk of the word: Before he was acquainted with God, he found it far otherwise; then nothing almost would down with him, the pure word could not be relished, except it was Adulterated with flourishes of humane wit. He had very little appetite to good wholsome Food, his stomack was ready to turn at it, except it were so cook't, and sawc't, and set out, that an understanding man could scarce tell what to make of it! What do you say to this, you that are so faint and cold, in what you do, in the Service of God? Come a little nearer, get better acquainted with God, and you shall find such entertainment from him, that you will scarce be able to keep long from his house; get oft into his company, and you shall feel your Soul strengthned with new Spirits, animated with a strange life, Heat and Warmth. You will not complain that the Sabbath is the longest day in the week; you will not say, *what a weariness is it? When will the new Moons and Sabbaths be*

at an end? But you would think long till the Sabbath day come, and when it is come, the pleasure that you take in the work of that day would make you to think it the shortest day, and gone too soon: and when you have spent it in the most diligent attendance upon God, you would wish it were to begin again, or that you were to begin such a Sabbath, that would never have an end. This is the condition of one that is very intimately acquainted with God; his nearness to his Master, makes him to follow his work, and he knows he shall lose nothing by it; something will be coming in ever and anon, which will more than quit his cost; So that when God calls, he is at hand, and readily answers, *Speak Lord, for thy Servant heareth.* When God hath any message, any hot Service to do, he accounts it his great honour to be Imployed in it, and saith, here I am, send me. I believe he that spoke it (*Ar. Ep.* l. c. 9.) might be a little confident, when he said, *Lay what thou wilt upon me, O God, I have power to bear it, it shall not be my Burden, but my Ornament:* Yet I am perswaded one that is acquainted with God, can say it, and say it again in good earnest; Lord what wilt thou have me to do? Wilt thou have me to preach for thee, to run through Fire, and Water for thee, to dye for thee, to go or come? O Lord do but bare me company, and give me strength, and it shall be done: I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me. This is one of Gods Champions, he watches, he keeps upon his guard, he fights stoutly, he stands his ground, in every thing he demeans himself gallantly, he quits himself like a Souldier of Christ; and that which makes him thus valiant,

is,

is becauſe he is ſo near his Captain. Ask *Epictetus* what made *Socrates* do as he did, and he will tell you (*l.* 3. *c.* 22) *It was becauſe he was a Friend of God his Servant, and partaker of his Kingdom.* This is ſtrange Language of a Heathen! but had he known vvhat it vvas to live under the moſt lively ſence of Gods love, to have had ſuch intimate converſe with him, as ſome Chriſtians have had, vvhat vvould he have ſaid? As for the Saint that keeps cloſe to God, he keeps cloſe to duty; his vvork is to ſerve, love, and praiſe God: This is his buſineſs, both by himſelf, and vvith others.

7. Another excellent effect of this acquaintance vvith God, is, it vvill make a man Patient under all the diſpenſations of Gods providence, in all conditions to be content, in quietneſſe to poſſeſs his Spirit: Acquaintance vvith God vvill make him be at peace, not to open his mouth againſt God, vvhatſoever he lays upon him. What vvas it that kept ſuch a calm in *Pauls* heart, when there vvas ſuch a conſtant ſtorm vvithout him? vvas it not his ſence of his intereſt in Gods love? though all the vvorld vvere his enemies, yet as long as Chriſt vvas his Friend, he doth not care, though men and devils be againſt him, yet if God be for him, he paſſeth not much upon it: though men be never ſo unjuſt, yet God vvill never be ſo, that's his comfort. It's a ſmall matter for him to be judged vvith mans judgment, as long as he is ſure that God vvill acquit him; he knows that juſtice it ſelf vvill do him no vvrong, infinite goodneſs could not be unkind, and that vviſdom it ſelf could vvork glorious effects out of theſe things, vvhich the vvorld call evil; if he do receive evil at the

hands of God, he is confident he deſerves more; if it be good, and but a little, he is thankful, becauſe he deſerved none at all. Let the worſt come to the worſt, if all the Devils in Hell, and all his inſtruments upon Earth ſhould combine againſt him, as long as he is ſure of the love of God, and that none of them all can pluck him out of the Arms of the Almighty, he is not very much concerned; Heaven will make amends for all: whatſoever he ſuffers, it is nothing to the diſpleaſure of a God, it is nothing to everlaſting burnings. He believes that if his perſecutors did know what he knows, they would as ſoon eat fire, as do as they do; therefore he rather pitties them, than is angry with them, as ſeeing that their day is coming! How ſeldom have you either *Paul* or *Silas* complaining of their ſufferings? How rarely bemoaning their condition? And what is it that makes them ſo patient? What have they to ſweeten ſuch bitter draughts? Why, God loves them; and ſo long, they do not much care though others hate them. Mans frowns can't ſink a Soul to Hell, nor his favour make one happy for ever. It is but a little while, and all tears ſhall be whiped away from their eyes. The kindneſs, and faithfulneſs of God is enough to make a man cheerfully to hold up his head, when all the World is againſt him. When the moſt Spiritual Chriſtians do complain, it is more of themſelves, than of their perſecutors: O my unbelieving heart! O that I ſhould love God no more! O that my heart ſhould be no more taken up with the great things of Eternity! This is the condition which thoſe that are moſt Spiritual are in Poverty, Impriſonment, Baniſhment, and all

these things which most call dreadfull, when they come to a man that is much in communion with God, they find him Patient, Meek, and Calm, these are not the things which put him upon the rack; God is his Friend, and that answers all.

8. Another glorious effect of Acquaintance with God, is, That it will make all our enjoyments doubly sweet. He hath what he hath in love; he need not be afraid of poyson in any of those Dainties which comes from his dearest Friends Table; he may eat his meat with a joyful heart, and not tremble for fear of the reckoning at last; what he enjoys is freely given him; all his Dishes have this brave Sauce, they are season'd with love, and come out of the hand of a Father. He that is the great Proprietor, hath given him leave to use these things and hath promised also to give him better things than these. He knows that this is not his portion, that this is nothing to what he shall possess; it is no small comfort to him, to think that he shall never want any thing that is needful for him; or that if he be brought into some exigencies, he hath a Friend that he can go to when he will, and be heartily welcome; he hath a portion, an estate in another Country that can never be spent, though he live at never so high a rate; and the more he spends upon it, the greater it is; he hath a key to that store-house which can never be emptied; he hath an interest in him in whom all fulness doth dwell: his Friend is noble, let him *but ask and he shall have, seek and he shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto him.* God is so free that he takes care of all his creatures; yea, so great is his Royal Bounty, that it doth largely provide for

for his enemies? and shall his friends, his children starve? Hath he not done so in ancient dayes: when his people were in the wilderness he sent them their Dyet from his own house, he fed them with Angels food. But if this should not be, if he kept them short, that may be done with as great kindness to them as the former: fasting may fatten the soul more then feasting doth the body; and this makes all welcome. If he have a great deal, he rejoyceth to think that he shall have more still one day; if he have but a little he is satisfied; and so his condition is made more comfortable to him, than the greatest enjoyments of the wicked are to them.

9. Another effect of his Acquaintance with God, is, That it will make a man wise. He that before he was acquainted with God had not the wit to know his Friends from his Foes, by his converse with God is made more wise than the great Sages and grand Politicians of the world. Upon his acquaintance with God, he is soon able to know right from wrong, to distinguish between good and evil. He hath now the wisdom to look after the salvation of his soul, to seek the Kingdom of Heaven in the first place, and not to be laughed and jeered into Hell. He is so wise, that he doth out-wit the Devil himself; he doth get so much wisdom by his acquaintance with God, that God will reveal many of his great secrets to him. I know one my self that was little different from those which are commonly called *Naturals*, whom when the Lord had wonderfully wrought upon, and brought near to himself, after his converse and acquaintance with God, his very natural understanding was exceedingly

refined, and afterward he became more discreet and fit to manage worldly affairs. But however this be, I am sure the knowledge of God gives understanding to the simple. *A good understanding have they which love the Lord: and the fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom.* Converse with men of Wisdom doth not a little improve a man: but converse with the wise God it makes a strange Altetation indeed, they are made wise unto Salvation. Of such as these *David* thought it best to make his Privy Council. These are the persons that are the fittest to advise with in businesses of the greatest importance in the world; they have learned the art of managing the affairs of greatest concernment with the greatest care and prudence. I know the wise world usually look upon the persons of the veriest fools living. To converse with God, to take all possible *care to make their calling and election sure*, to do what one can to be happy for ever, goes amongst them for a ridiculous thing, and more than needs. But it is no great matter, they will not be beat from their work thus; they should be fools indeed, if such things as these should make them turn their backs upon God; they will not be jeer'd out of Heaven, they pass not upon mans censures. He is wise that God calls so, and he will be found to be a fool which God saith is so. As for the man that is acquainted with God, all his actions speak him a man of prudence, one that hath a deep reach with him, he is a man of an excellent foresight, he sees the clouds a gathering a great way off, the storm before it riseth, and he hides himself, in him are hid the treasures of Wisdom, he makes no fooliſh choice, he is a child

of

of vviſdom; he doth in ſome meaſure underſtand himſelf, and knovvs vvhere his intereſt lies, and is faithful to it; he makes no fooliſh bargains, vvhen he parts vvith Dung for Diamonds, Braſs for Gold, Earth for Heaven, Sin for Holineſs, preſent ſhort-liv'd Pleaſures for ſure and everlaſting Delights, the Devil for God. Hovv ſay you, ye mad Gallants, that look upon the Saint as a Fool, and Religion as a Ridiculous thing? Are theſe ſuch fooliſh actings? is it ſo undiſcreet a choice to prefer Heaven before Hell? If this be to be a fool, I vviſh I vvere more ſuch a fool; if this be ſo contemptible a thing, O that I may yet be more vile! Let me ſay further, as great a folly as it is, there are none of you all, but ere long vvill vviſh you had been ſuch fools. A fevv years vvill make you all of another mind, vvhen you ſee vvhat thoſe that you counted fools have got, and vvhat you vvith your vviſdom have loſt; then let's hear you calling them fools for chuſing Chriſt for their portion; and your ſelf vviſe for deſpiſing him, and chuſing of this preſent vvorld for your portion. Novv, it is their being acquainted vvith God, that hath made them thus vviſe; time vvas, that they vvere as very fools as any in the vvorld, till they fell into Gods company; and ever ſince that, they have acted vvith a great deal more prudence: their being much in Gods company hath much improved them. They may thank God for all that skill that they have attained to; for he it is that teached them, he is alvvays at their elbovv to direct them; vvhen they are about to be cheated, he vvhiſpers them in the ear, lets them underſtand the fraud; and vvhen God ſpeaks, they liſten to his counſel. It vvas no

falſhood which *Seneca* ſpake (though he underſtood not the meaning of this Doctrine of Reconciliation) in the commendation of Wiſdom. *Wiſdom* (ſaith he) *is a great ſpacious thing, it inſtructs us both in Divine and Humane things, it teacheth a man how to demean himſelf in relation to things, paſt, preſent, and to come: it informs him about things that are fading, and things that are laſtening; and by it he knows how to put a true eſtimate and value on both: this learns on the difference between Time and Eternity.* Thus far *Seneca:* But where is this Wiſdom to be found? not in *Ariſtole* nor *Plato*'s writings. The grand Maximes of this Wiſdom were little underſtood in the *Peripatetick* or *Stoick* Schools; Fleſh and Blood, Humane Wiſdom improv'd to the height, reveal not theſe things to us. Where then is this Wiſdom to be found? and where is the place of underſtanding? man knows not the price of it naturally: The Depth ſaith, It is not in me, it can't be got for Silver, &c. Deſtruction and Death ſay, we have heard the Fame thereof with our ears. There is talk of Wiſdom in Hell, there they can ſay what reports were made to them of the Excellencies of Chriſt, and how earneſtly they were offered to be inſtructed in the ways of Wiſdom. But in Hell there is no Wiſdom, though a world of them, which by their wiſdom knew not God, be there: where then is wiſdom? God underſtands the way of it, and he teacheth man wiſdom, and thoſe that will come to him ſubmit to his inſtructions, may learn: the Leſſon is ſhort, yet learnt but by few; he tells man, that to fear and love his Maker, and to be brought into Union, Friendſhip, and Acquaintance with God, that is Wiſdom; and to depart

from

from iniquity, that is understanding, *Job* 28. 12, 13, 14, &c.

10. Another effect of this Acquaintance with God, is, It will make a man rich. As soon as any one is acquainted with God, he is set in a thriving way. Man at the first had his estate in his own hands, and he kept up his Trade for a little time, and but for a little time; for though his stock was great, yet meeting with the Serpent, that great Cheater, he was miserably overreached, and so sadly impaired in his Spiritual Estate, that he broke presently; and had not Jesus Christ stept in and bayled him, and been his surety, he would soon have had all his Creditors upon his back, and have been laid up in that dismal prison; till he should have paid the utmost farthing; but through the kindness of Christ the grand Creditor had patience, and offers to make up the business, and to compound upon better tearms than the sinner could possibly expect. Christ undertakes to heal the infinite breach, to bring God and Man acquainted, and to set him up again, incase he will but accept of the gracious terms of agreement; and thus undon man that was before in a beggarly condition, upon his return to *God*, is set in a better vvay than ever; *God* his Friend novv takes such order for him, that he shall be sure never to break again; he vvill be his Cash-keeper, he vvill have the over-sight of all, he will teach him such an art, that he shall be sure to get by every thing that he trades in; he shall gain by his losses, grovv rich by his poverty, and drive the best trade it may be, vvhen he is forced to shut his Shop-doors, I mean in a time of a violent persecution. Whatsoever losses or Crosses

come; he is sure he shall never be undone as long as his Friend hath so great a bank; he hath a key, and he can go to an infinite Treasury, when he pleaseth, and fetch out supplies for any exigencies or occasions; and when all those that made such a great show in the World, and that were taken for Merchants, that were exceeding well to pass, shall be proclaimed Bankrupts, and be found not worth a Farthing, and be carryed to prison for debt; then he hath mony in his purse, coyn that will go currant in any Country. In the mean time, though he be thought to be worth nothing, to drive but a pittiful poor trade, yet when he comes to dye, and when an exact inventory is taken of all that he is worth, he is found worth thousands: and no wonder when he hath such a Partner, that will be sure to see that his business shall be managed to the best advantage, and that he shall never be out of purse; upon this account, the man can't choose but thrive; he will have something to show for his gains, when others have nothing. When the rich ones of the world shall be begging a droop of water, he is at the fountain. If we should take a survey of that mans estate, that is acquainted with God, you must lift up your eyes to those everlasting Hills; you must look East, West, North and South; all this is his, things present, and things to come; mount up to the top of *Carmel*, your sight is too short, you see not the hundredth part of his inheritance, all this is nothing, he hath a brave estate in another Country; he is rich in Bills and Bonds, when he comes to age, he will have no man know what falls to him; and whence hath he all this wealth, hath he not got every penny of it since he was acquainted

quainted with God? But I shall be but brief upon this Head, because I have handled, what might have fallen in here before; but the world laughs when I speak at this rate, and think that I am much mistaken; the godly man rich! that's strange! what, rich with scarce cloaths to their back! rich, and fare so hardly! rich, and possess nothing! this is strange wealth. I grant it is, it is so, for their estate is in invisibles; it is not he that possesseth much, but he that wants little, is rich: Will you call nothing riches, but Gold and Silver, and Houses and Lands? is Virtue, Grace, Holiness no riches? And will you call these little because he hath not so much trouble and vexation with his estate as some have? is Heaven, Glory, the everlasting enjoyment of God nothing? Is the possessing that which is more worth than a thousand Worlds, no riches; If to have all things that are good for them; If to have more than their hearts can conceive; If to be filled with all Spiritual plenty, be counted poverty; let me be thus poor, rather than enjoy the Revenue of all the Princes, and great Ones of the World. And what do you think of this, you that are worth never a penny? Are you desirous to have a great Estate? you that go backward, and get nothing, would be set in such a way, as that you may be sure never to break. Why then, get acquainted with God, and you can't but grow rich.

11. Another glorious effect of acquaintance with God, is, that it makes a man like God, which is the top of the Creatures honour. Company is of an assimilating nature. He that before was unholy, and like the Devil; by conversion to God, and

and converſe with him is made holy like God. He that before was cruel, fiery, unmerciful, by his acquaintance with God is made kind, meek, and lovely. He that in his natural ſtate, was a Non-Conformiſt to the Laws of his Maker, when he is well ſtudied in this point, is the ſtiffeſt Conformiſt, he ſticks cloſe to the righteous Cannons of the holy God, and will not by his good will turn to the right hand, or to the left. He that was ſometimes very unlike God, when he is brought nigh unto him, his countenance is changed, his features are altered, and the lineaments of Gods image appear very lively in his face; and the more he is in Gods company, and the older he grows, the more he grows like him. O how doth ſuch a one ſhine! what a Majeſty, Glory, and Beauty is there in his face! the oftner he comes to God, the more he is taken with his Excellency, the more he labours to imitate him. He ſtudies what God is; and as far as his nature is capable of it in this life, he deſires to be like him. If God be true and faithful, he dare not be falſe; but he will hate the way of lying; if God be free and bountiful, he thinks it very ill becomes one of his Children to hide his face from his own fleſh, to ſhut up his bowels, to be void of natural affection. If purity be ſo eminent in God, he knows that impurity would not be commendable in himſelf. In a word, he deſires in every thing to carry himſelf, as one whoſe higheſt ambition, is to ſpeak, act, and think as one that would be like God. It was bravely ſpoken of him (*Sen. Ep.* 37.) eſpecially if we conſider what the man was, who told his Friend that call'd him to Heaven *in compendium, To get as much happineſs as this place, this*

ſoul

ſoul, while in this body, is capable of; that is, to get God for his Friend, to be like him. This is a ſhort cut to glory, a Soul carried to Heaven, or Heaven brought down to the Soul. A full and perfect conformity and likeneſs to God is the very Glory of Glory; and a partial conformity to him upon earth, is his unſpeakable honour in this life: O were men and women better acquainted with God, they would ſparkle and ſhine in their Generation, ſo that their enemies ſhould be forced to ſay, that a Saint is another kind of Creature than a ſenſual ſinner. O why ſtand you then ſo far off from God! come nearer him, and the rays of his glorious Image will reflect from your lives! Be acquainted with him, and you ſhall be like him; keep much in his company by Faith, ſecret Prayer, and Meditation, and you will be more Holy, Divine, and Spiritual.

12. The laſt effect of this acquaintance with God, which I ſhall name, is this, it will make a man better, far more Excellent in all ſtates, and relations; all his Friends will have the better life with him, the whole Family, it may be where he dwells, will fare the better for him. If he be a Child, he is more dutiful to his Parents than he was, while he was unacquainted with God? if he be a Servant, he is more diligent and Faithful than before, he ſerves not with eye ſervice, but doth what he doth with ſingleneſs of heart, as unto the Lord? If he be a Maſter, it makes him more exemplary, and makes him to take care that his Houſhold ſhould ſerve the Lord; he had rather his ſervants ſhould make bold with him than God, he is concerned for the honour of God in his Family, as much as his own; if he be a Fa-

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ther, he is careful to bring up his children for God, he is more Spiritual in his affections to them, and desirous to leave them God for their Father, Friend, Portion; as he is a Neighbour, he follows peace with all men, and holiness, because he hath seen God. How sweet and amiable doth acquaintance with God make a man! how ready to heal divisions! how full of goodness and charity! how ready to do good unto all, but especially to those that be of the Houshold of Faith! how compassionate, and tender-hearted! How ready to provoke others also to love, and good works: so that the whole Parish lives the quieter, all the poor fare the better, all the Neighbourhood, some way or other is beholding to him: one that knows God himself, doth what he can to get others acquainted with God too? How sweetly doth he commend the way of Wisdom? with what earnestness, and pitty doth he plead with sinners, and labour to teach transgressors the paths of God, that sinners may be converted unto him? How doth he set before them the necessity of a change, the danger of their present state, and the excellent qualities of this Friend that he would bring them acquainted with; telling them, that time was, that he also vvas as they are, and thought his condition as safe as they do their's: but that it pleased the Lord by this vvord to open his eyes, and to reveal to him the need that he had of Christ, and to inable him to accept of him, and to prize him above the vvhole vvorld. In all conditions, and relations, he commends Religion, and shevvs that godliness, vvhere it is in the povver and life of it, is a brave thing, vvhich makes so great an alteration in a man for the better?

better? If he be ſick, he rejoyceth, and thinks cheerfully of death, the Grave and Eternity: and in this ſtate demeans himſelf ſo, that ſtanders by, can't but be convinced of the reality of inviſibles, and to think ſure there is ſomething more than ordinary in acquaintance with God, which makes men ſo undaunted, and with ſo much gallantry to meet death; ſure their condition is better than ours, or elſe they could never be ſo joyful at ſuch a time as this is: Then he tells of the uſe of a Chriſt, the benefit of a Redeemer in a dying hour, and how infinitely it is for their intereſt, in time to provide for Eternity? if he be well, he deſires to improve his health for God, and to ſerve his Maker with the ſtrength of Body, and Soul. If he be poor, he ſhews a pattern of Patience, Meekneſs, Thankfulneſs, and lets the world underſtand that godlineſs with content is great gain; if he be rich, he deſires to be rich in good works alſo, and to trade with ſuch triſles as Gold and Silver, for rich commodities, as Grace, Peace and Glory: with the things of this World, for the things of another: To lay up for himſelf Treaſure, which neither Moth can corrupt, nor Thieves break through, and ſteal: and to make to himſelf a Friend of the unrighteous Mammon; to be a Faithful ſteward of thoſe Talents that his great Lord and Maſter hath committed to his truſt: he ſhows how great a good it is to be great and good too. This is the man, which doth adorn the Goſpel: This is the Chriſtian which doth credit his profeſſion; this, 'tis to be intimately acquainted with God! O how uſefull might men and women be in their generations, were they but more in Gods company? O what

a ſavour would there be of their Graces in the place where they live? How would poor Creatures that receive good by their holy counſels, and ſuitable lives, bleſs God for the day that ever they were born, and adore that goodneſs which brought them near ſuch and ſuch a one, by whoſe means God hath brought them out of the Vaſſalage and Captivity of Satan and by whoſe help they have got acquainted with a Friend that is more worth to them than a world; for one that hath God for his Friend, can't but deſire that others alſo ſhould have an intereſt in him; they know how ill it will go with them that know not God, and this makes them to do what they can to bring God and man acquainted; they would make thoſe that are good better, and them that are bad good? if thoſe that he converſeth with, or ſtands related to, were enemies, he lets them know that a Chriſtian can love him dearly, whoſe ſin he hates entirely, and that a child of God can pitty them, that have no pitty at all for him. I might add how oft are a great many wicked ones ſpared from temporal judgements, for the ſakes of the righteous that are amongſt them.

III. HEAD OF MOTIVES.

The next Head of *Motives* to enforce this Exhortation, might be taken from the danger of not being acquainted with God. If you could live ſecurely without God, and be in a ſafe condition, though you ſtill remained a ſtranger to him, the buſineſs then were not ſo very conſiderable; if you could find any in Heaven that could do as much

much for you as God can, I should not be so earnest with you to get an interest in his favour; if you could by any means possible be everlastingly happy any other way, if without this Friend get to Heaven, and without his Alliance avoid utter ruine, I should have had the less reason to use so much importunity; I might then possibly have spared my self the trouble of speaking these things, and you the trouble of hearing of them. But when I see and know that it is as much as their life and soul is worth, to slight and undervalue the Motions that I am now a making to you in Christs stead, how can I with any faithfulness and love to your souls hold my peace? How can I stand looking upon men and women that are about to murder their own souls, and forbear crying out? How can I endure to see poor Creatures running with all the speed they can to that dismal place, from whence there is no Redemption, and not endeavour to stop them? Would you have me so cruel to your souls, as not to tell that which doth infinitely concern their well-being? for, let me tell you, God will not stand Neuter, he will be either for you, or against you; he is the Lord of Hosts, and he will fight on one side or other. Now see to your matters, as the nature of them doth require. What do you think of having a God against you? if God be against you, who will be for you? *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.* The safest condition you can be in, while God is your enemy, is sadly hazzardous; such a one hangs by a twined thread over everlasting flames; he stands upon the brink of that bottomless pit, and one shove, one slip, sends him going

for

for ever; he ſtands upon a pinacle, which one little blaſt may blow him off, and then where is the man to all Eternity? if he fall thence, there is no riſing again; if he once go into that other World, there is no recovery of him, if one would give a World to bring him back again. I ſay it again, if God be not your Friend, he will be your Enemy: and what do you think of ſuch an Enemy? It is but a word, a look, and they fall. Let me tell you, that except you ſpeedily humble your ſelves, you ſhall find that we do not make the danger greater than it is: according to his fear, ſo is his wrath: you may know ſoon enough to your coſt, what the diſpleaſure of a God is, how dreadful his arrows, how ſharp his ſword. Not a man of them ſhall ſcape that will not accept of peace upon his termes, and that quickly too. O that will be a ſad day, when God ſhall ſay, *Bring them out and ſlay them before my face.* If God be your enemy, who do you think will be your Friend? To which of the Saints or Angels will you fly? Where will you go for ſhelter againſt the ſtorm of that terrible one? what armour will defend you from the dint of his weapons? What in the world can ſtand that man in any ſtead that hath ſuch an Adverſary? eſpecially when he comes to give his definitive ſentence againſt him for high Treaſon. *Dives* may ſay, Father; and *Abraham*, Son: but what comfort for all that had the miſerable Child from his holy Father? doth he not inſteal of cooling his tongue with a drop of water, lay more burning coals upon it, and if it be poſſible, make the heat of it greater: *Son, remember that thou in thy life time hadſt thy good things.* Thus *Abraham* by putting him in mind what his condition

was,

vvay, makes him vvith the greater ſorrovv to feel vvhat it is. The memory of former joys under preſent Sorrovvs, makes them ſting the more. Well then, if you vvould not hereafter reflect vvith an aking heart upon your loſt Enjoyments, think vvith a ſerious and thankful heart of the preſent offers, that you may in Eternity reflect vvith joy upon your ſhort Sorrovvs in time. If you vvill not be acquainted vvith God, you ſhall be acquainted vvith the Devil, and knovv vvhoſe company is beſt by vvoful experience. If you vvill not believe his Word, you ſhall feel his Svvord. If his Kindneſs and Goodneſs vvill not melt you, his povver and juſtice ſhall break you; for he that novv is ſo patient, vvill ere long roar like a Lyon, and tear in pieces, and there ſhall be none to deliver; he vvill break his ſtubborn enemies vvith a rod of iron, and daſh them in pieces like a potters veſſel. Thoſe that vvill not knovv his love, ſhall knovv ſomething elſe; I vvill not ſay vvhat, for it is Inexpreſſible. But only this Remember, It is ſuch a God that you vvill have to deal vvith, before vvhom the mountains quake, and the hills remove out of their places, before vvhom the great Tyrants of the vvorld have fallen; and ſhall you ſtand? Where are all thoſe Giants? Where are the inhabitants of the old World? What is become of *Nimrod* that mighty hunter, and all his fellovvs? Where are all thoſe daring ſinners, that ſcorned to accept of a Pardon, Mercy and Peace, and vvhich had the Courage to grapple vvith Omnipotency it ſelf? Who got the day? vvho had the vvorſt of it at laſt? And art thou ſtronger than they? Is thy povver greater, thy underſtanding deeper, thy Allyes more conſide-

rable than theirs? A fly may be too hard for *Pharaoh*; but *Pharaoh* can never be too hard for God. Becauſe judgment is not ſpeedily executed againſt thee, thou thinkeſt therefore it may be it is becauſe God cannot deal vvith thee, and upon this account thy heart is fully ſet in thee to do vvickedly, but know thou, for all this that God vvill bring thee to judgement. Conſider this, that as fair as it ſeems to be now, the vvinds may riſe, the clouds may gather of a ſudden, the Heavens may be overcaſt in a moment; and vvhat will you do then? vvhen Heaven and Earth ſhall be in a Flame, then you will be ſcraping acquaintance vvith God, then you vvill be glad to be owned by him, then you vvould vvillingly Chriſt ſhould take notice of you, and ſay, *You bleſſed of my Father*; then you vvill ſtand at the door and Knock, and Cry, and Pray, and Plead, and ſay, *Lord, Lord, have I not been oft at thy houſe? have I not eat at thy table, and taught in thy name in our ſtreets?* And yet thou ſhalt be diſmiſſed with this ſhort and ſharp anſwer, *Depart, I know you not.* How do you like ſuch an anſwer as this is? How will you take it, when you ſtand begging at the door for one crumb of mercy, one drop of Chriſts blood, to be ſent away with a bitter ſcorn and denial, or elſe to be anſwered with ſilence? Whereas you were invited to the feaſt as well as thoſe that went in, and you would not hear, though God ſent meſſenger after meſſenger to fetch you, you thought your oxen better company than your God; you took more pleaſure in your dogs, than in the hunting after thoſe nobler things. What do you think of ſuch expoſtulations as theſe? What replies can you

make

make to these accusations? Ere long you will find these things realities; ere long all your friends will be dead and gone, and if they would help you, they cannot; your estate will be consumed, your houses will all be burnt, all your attendants, except care and fear, will shortly forsake you; your Gold and Silver will not ere long be worth a rush; and what will you do then? nay, the greatest friends that you had will become your Enemies. Little do you think, as kind as they seem to be, what your good fellows, the World, and the Devil will do against you; Little do you think how false your friends will prove when it comes to that, that they see that all is going? Then they also will help forward your ruine. Those that you durst have trusted your life with, will accuse you and help to cast you. Those which incouraged to Sin, will witness against you for Sin. Your good Fellows, your Confederates in wickedness, your dear Friends, that you loved more than God, that you did not spare to venture your Life and Soul for. O it will make your heart ake to see such come in against you, which you thought loved you so dearly! O to have a Wife, a Child, a Husband, an old Friend to come before the Judge, and to make known such things as you hoped had been buried for ever. It will make your ears tingle, to hear one crying out, Lord, if it had not been for him, I had turned and repented; it's long of him that I am in this woful condition; I was resolved many a time and oft to seek after another world, and to provide for my Soul, but he would not let me alone; when I began to be serious, he laughed and jeer'd me, and would never be at quiet till he had made

me as bad as himſelf; he carried me from the Ale-houſe to the Tavern, from thence to a Play-houſe, from a Play-houſe to a Whore-houſe, from thence to the High-way, from thence to the Gaol, from the Gaol to the Gallows, and from thence I came hither; and I may thank him for all this. O how will men look when they ſee the beſt Friends that they had, come in thus againſt them! This 'tis to truſt to faithleſs Friends; this 'tis to make light of acquaintance with God. Your Gold and Silver will be a witneſs againſt you, and will eat your fleſh as with a canker; your Children, Relations Good and Bad, will ſpeak bitter things againſt you; your own Family will curſe you, and ſay, Lord. we never heard any thing of God, except in an Oath from his mouth; we never heard any thing of Religion, except it were in deriſion of it in his Family; and thoſe of us that were a little ſerious, and began to think of our Souls, he would ſnib and brow-beat, and never give us a kind look till we did as he did; nay, the Devil who now doth ſo much flatter ſinners, and make them believe that he is ſo much their Friend, will then ſhew himſelf; he will then be as cruel as he now ſeems kind; he that now tempts to ſin ſo impetuouſly, will hereafter accuſe for ſin violently, and torment for ſin unmercifully. The people of God which weep over ſinners, and pray for them, and wiſh them well with their Souls, will then ſee juſtice executed upon their neareſt Relations, without the leaſt ſorrow; nay, they alſo will come in againſt them too, and ſay, Lord I told them of this woful day. O Lord thou knoweſt I forewarned them of that which is now come to

paſs,

pity, I pleaded vvith them vvith all the compaſſion that I could, and they ſcorned my pitty, they would not pity themſelves, but made light of that Glory vvhich they are going from, and of that Hell that they are going to; and now, O Lord, thou art juſt and Righteous, that thou haſt thus judged them This will be the Language of thoſe that are your beſt Friends; the people of God they vvill be your Enemies one day, if you vvill not now mind the making of your Peace with God; they muſt and vvill, be on Gods ſide againſt all the World; they muſt and vvill take part vvith their Friend, and clear him vvhen he judges, and juſtifie him vvhen he condemns you. O that you that are now ſtrangers to God, vvould but conſider of theſe things! O that you vvould but think vvhat this Battel may be, vvhere the Combatants are ſo unequal. Stand ſtill O Sun in the Valley of *Ajalom*, till the Lord have avenged him of his Enemies: Muſter your ſelves, O ye Stars, and fight in your courſes againſt thoſe miſerable ſinners, that have vvaged a War againſt their Maker; plant your mighty Cannons, ſhoot down huge Hailſtones, Arrows of Fire, and hot Thunderbolts? O how do the vvounded fall! How many are the ſlain of the Lord, multitudes, multitudes in the Vally of Deciſion, for the day of the Lord is terrible. Behold Gods Enemies falling by thouſands, behold the garments rouling in blood, here the prancing of his terrible ones, the mountains are covered vvith Horſes and Chariots of Fire. Gods Souldiers run from one place to another vvith their flaming Swords in their Hands, Arm'd vvith the juſtice of God, Jealouſie, Power and Indignation! O the dreadful

ſlaughter that is made. Millions, Millions fall, they are not able to ſtand, not one of them can lift up his hand, their hearts fail them, paleneſs and trembling hath Seized upon the ſtouteſt of them all. The bow of the Lord is ſtrong: From the Blood of the Slain, from the Fat of the mighty, the Bow of the Lord turneth not back, the Sword of the Almighty returnes not empty? How do the mighty Ones, fall in the midſt of this battel! A hot Battel indeed in which none ſcape? Who is he that commeth from *Edom* with dyed Garments from *Boſrah*? He that is Glorious in his Apparel, and Travelling in the greatneſs of his Strength, the Lord of Hoſts is his Name. Wherefore art thou red in thy Apparel, and thy Garments like him that treadeth the Wine-fat? I have troden the Wine-preſs alone, and of the people there was none with me. For I vvill Tread them in mine Anger, and trample them in my Fury, and their Blood ſhall be ſprinkled upon my Garments, and I will ſtain all my Raiment, for the day of Vengeance is in my Heart, and the year of my Redeemption is come. And I will Tread down the People in mine Anger, and make them Drunk in my Fury, and I will bring down their ſtrength to the Earth, the hand of the Lord ſhall be known, the power of the mighty *Jehovah* ſhall be felt, and his Indignation towards his Enemies. For behold he will come with Fire and with Chariots like a Whirl-wind, to render his Anger with Fury, and his Rebuke with flames of Fire: For by fire, and by his Sword will he plead vvith all Fleſh: And the ſlain of the Lord ſhall be many, and the Saints ſhall go forth and look upon the Carcaſes of the Men, that have Trangreſſed againſt

ſt me: For their Worm ſhall not die, neither ſhall their Fire be quenched, and they ſhall be an abhorring unto all Fleſh. Upon the wicked he ſhall Rain Snares, Fire and Brimſtone, and a horrible Tempeſt. This ſhall be the Portion of their Cup! This 'tis to fight againſt God! This 'tis to defie the Lord of Hoſt! This 'tis to refuſe a Peace that would have been ſo unſpeakably advantagious! To ſpeak a little plainer, this is all that ſinners are like to get by their ſtanding it out againſt the tenders of Grace and Mercy. And are you ſtill deſirous to Engage in this Dreadful War? Will you ſtill bid Defiance to the Almighty, and make nothing of ſuch things as you have heard of? Is the loſs of your blood, the loſs of your Soul, your utter undoing for ever, no great matter with you? Well then, go on bold ſinner, Arm thy ſelf *Cap-a-pee*, gird thy Sword upon thy Thigh, get thy Shield and Buckler ready, prepare to meet thy God: Go up, O thou valiant Warrior, and lets ſee thy Valour, behold thy Enemy hath taken the Field; go up, and look thy God in the face if thou dareſt; come ſhew thy ſelf a mark for God, and turn not thy back like a Coward, venture upon the mouth of the Cannon, Ruſh upon the thick Boſſes of Gods Buckler, if you long to periſh everlaſtingly. You have heard what the War will coſt you, and as you like it now, do. And what, do you laugh at all this? Well then, go on, but be it upon your Perril, your blood be upon your own Soul: As for me I could not have ſaid much more than I have, to diſſwade you from this deſperate Enterpriſe; I foreſee what a caſe you will be in, when you are in the heat of the Battel, and I deſire to weep in ſecret for thee.

as one that will moſt certainly be undone, if thou doſt not ſpeedily alter thy mind, wherefore my Loyns are filled with pain. Pangs have taken hold upon me as the Pangs of a Woman that Travelleth, I am bowed down at the thoughts of thy Miſery, I am diſmayed at the ſeeing of thy Deſtruction. The ſinner ventures for all this! He is marched into the Field! Set a Watch-man; let him declare what he ſeeth. Who meets that furious Wretch? A Lyon, a Lyon roareth, he is torn in pieces, and none can ſave him, he is gone, he is gon! He is gon for ever! And vvho may the mad man thank for all this? Who could help it? He would venture though he was told as much. Well then, ſee what's like to befall the Enemies of God: You hear what is like to be the Condition of all them that will not be acquainted with God: Firſt, or Laſt, you likwiſe may behold vvhat a caſe you your ſelf ſhall be in ere it be long, except you do ſpeedily Repent of your Folly, and meet your Adverſary in the way, and humble your ſelf before the mighty *Jehovah*; ſpeak quickly? What will you do? Turn, or Burn; Repent, or Die. Yet you do but hear, you do not feel; but thouſands and millions feel vvhat the Diſpleaſure of God is, what the breach of his Covenant is, and vvhat effects of a War vvith the Lord of Hoſts is. O be vviſe by their Falls, let their Deſtruction be your Inſtruction, take heed vvhat you do, leſt you be the next that God ſhall deal vvith as an Enemy: As yet God offers to be Friends vvith you; but vvhether God vvill do as much to morrow as he doth to day, I do not know. I tell you but ſo, it's hard putting it to the venture. Remember you had large

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offers of Grace and Pardon made to you, God hath sent us to let you know his Will and pleasure, and vve demand of you from him to give us your answer speedily. And vvhat, can't you yet resolve? Is it so difficult a business to determine what to fix upon? O foolish People and unwise? O unspeakable Madness! How just must their Condemnation needs be, vvho are offered Salvation so often, and refuse it? Who are so oft told of Damnation, and yet run into it? in a vvord, vvho might have God for their Friend, and had rather have him for their Enemy.

4. The next Head of *Motives*, by vvhich I might inforce this Duty of Acquaintance with God, may be taken from the Examples of them vvhich made all the Friends they can to get acquainted vvith God. Behold a Cloud of Witnesses, vvhich do all with one consent speak high in the commendation of this Friend, that I am perswading you all that I can to be acquainted with. Are you vviser than all your Neighbours, is the ignorant Objection of some that vvould take it very heinously, if vve should call them Fools, vvhen we put them upon a serious diligence in pursuit of the best things? Why, let me retort this Objection upon themselves, are you wiser than *Enoch* and *Noah*? Have you more understanding than *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*? Have you more vvit than *David*? Are you wiser than *Heman*, *Daniel*, and many others of those brave Worthies, which were the Wonders of the vvorld, the Non suches of their Age, and a Pattern to future Generations? This vvas the greatest piece of their Wisdom to walk vvith God, this vvas the best of their policy to get a potent an Allie; this spake them to be men of

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a deeper reach, and a larger underſtanding than others, becauſe they made it their buſineſs to get acquainted with God, and thus to make their intereſt as large as Heaven, and their peace and proſperity as ſure as the Oath of a God could make it. Do you think that all theſe men were miſtaken? Did their Wiſdom lie only in a prudent management of their worldly affairs to their beſt Advantage? vvhat then, did they mean ſome of them to leave all that they had ſo chearfully upon the command of God? Dare you ſay that they prized the Favour of God at too high a rate? As for their parts, they thought they could never value ſuch a Friend as God too much. What elſe was the meaning of their longing, panting, and breathing after him? Why elſe are they ſo glad of his Company, his Preſence? How loath were they to do any thing that might be in the leaſt diſpleaſing to him? What bitter Moans did they make, if he did but vvithdraw a while, if he did but a little abſent himſelf from them? How wonderful deſirous were they of enjoying Communion with him? How earneſt to Live in his Houſe for ever? Dare you ſay that they were all Fools and madmen for refuſing the embraces of this preſent World, for ſlighting its ſmiles, and undervaluing its greateſt kindneſſes, and chooſing that favour of God, though with the ſcorns and reproaches of the World, rather than to hazard his anger, whoſe Wrath burns to the bottom of Hell. Behold, what a glorious Company as theſe ſtand upon Mount *Zion* with Harps in their hands, with thoſe hundred and forty and four Thouſand, and the Lamb with an innumerable Multitude of all Nations, People,

and

Languages. Why all theſe were of the ends and acquaintance of God, or elſe they never had thoſe Crowns, Robes, and Palms in their Hands. Now, why ſhould not our Souls be as dear to us as theirs was to them? Will not Heaven be as good for us as them? Is it not as needful for us to get a Friend of God, as them? Will not God do as much for us as them, if we will but do as they did, Walk with him. The Truth of it is, the number of them which are ſaved is but few, in compariſon of the Multitudes of them which know not God, and go the broad way; yet for all that, take them abſolutely, they are abundance; ſo many that the Scripture ſaith they are innumerable. Do but Read over the Hiſtory of ſome of their Lives, turn over the holy Records, look ſomtimes into thoſe Sacred Chronicles, and behold how cheerfully they ſerved God, how actively they followed the Lamb whereſoever he goes, through thick and thin. Hear what their Language is now they are got home ſafe, now Chriſt hath brought them to Glory, and they are at their Friends Houſe, What do they talk of? What is their Diſcourſe about? Do they complain what a ſad journey they had of it through a howling Wilderneſs, after they had paſſed the Red-Sea, through a thouſand Sorrows and Trials? Do they ſay, that now they are at their journeys end, that they are weary, and wiſh they had never taken ſo long and tedious a journey? do they not rather ſpeak the quite contrary, and that if it were to go again they would do it with far more ſpeed and cheerfulneſs than they did? Liſten, Hark, methinks I hear them from the Walls of the *New Jeruſalem* Crying out, Come away

away, come away, fall on bravely, follovv your buſineſs gallantly but a little vvhile longer, and the City is your ovvn; fetch your Scaling Ladders, run up apace, mount the Rampiers, fear nothing though the Devil play his Artillery upon them, yet it is but povvder, he ſhall never give you a mortal Wound; reſiſt him and he vvill fly, and the Field is yours; the Spoil, the Crovvn, the Honour vvill pay for your paines, blood, and danger. Fall on brave Souls, fall on; the Valianter you be, the more ſafe you are. Methinks I hear thoſe Noble Saints encouraging of you to get acquaintance with God, and ſaying to you that are yet afar off, come near. Come avvay poor ſouls, come avvay, vvhat do you mean thus to delay? O little do you think vvhat a friend we now find of God; it vvas but a little, a very little that was told us of the Excellency of Chriſt, and the glories of this place, to vvhat vve experience; It vvas no falſe report that vve heard vvhen vve vvas upon earth, of the Happineſs of Heaven: O here's a prize worth the running for; a Kingdom, a Crown vvorth the fighting for, an Eſtate vvorth the looking after. We have not now our ſtint; vve are not dieted vvith thoſe Spiritual Dainties, vve have not now and then a ſip, a draught, a bit in a corner, but vve are at the Fountain, vve are daily feaſted vvith infinite Pleaſures, our hearts are full, brim-full, they run over, vve ſwim in an Ocean of ſpiritual enjoyments; theſe things are beyond your Capacity now to underſtand. Were vve to live upon earth again, and did vve know vvhat vve do now know, vve ſhould ever pine with our earneſt longing for God, the living God, to be in his immediate preſence, and to be at that ange-

lical vvork of Praiſing, Serving, and Loving for ever. Wherefore brethren, let us encou- one another, *Come let us go up to the houſe of the Lord; his dwelling is in* Salem, *his palace is upon Mount* Zion. Why ſhould not vve go on as merrily in the pathes of Wiſdom, as the vvicked in the Road of Hell? Hovv do the Devils Champions incourage and hearten one another up? How do they Laugh, Sing and Roar, as if their Life were the only Life; for ſhame let's tell them they lye in their teeth. Who hath the beſt company, they or vve? The Patriarchs and Prophets, the Apoſtles and thouſands of Martyrs are gone Singing before; ſome of our dear Relations, Fathers, Brethren and Siſters are newly welcomed by Chriſt to his fathers houſe; and they are bleſſing that Rich Mercy that hath Conducted them to ſuch a Place, to ſuch a Friend! We have many Thouſands of Saints-Militant that are going along vvith us as faſt as they can, and God himſelf vvill bear us company; and vvhy do vve yet Linger? O that vve vvere upon the Wing! O that our Souls were like the Chariots of *Aminadab*! O that the Lord vvould ſtrengthen poor ſhort-winded Creatures? O that vve could run and not be vveary, and vvalk and not faint! O that vve might have now and then a hearty meal, and that in the ſtrength of them vve could travel to the mount of God! O that that acquaintance might novv be happily begun, vvhich may never have an end! O that God would viſit us oft, and get into our hearts! O that he that gave thoſe Worthies in former times ſo much grace, vvould pour out of the ſame grace in abundance upon our Souls! O that he vvould ſhed abroad his love in our Hearts! O that

vve

we could maintain a conſtant intercourſe with him here, till we come to a perfect enjoyment of him in glory hereafter! O that we may ſee thy face, thy bleſſed face, by faith! O that thou wouldeſt cauſe thy glory to paſs before us! O that thy marvellous loving kindneſs might be made known to a company of poor Creatures of us, whoſe deſire is to fear thee, who would fain love thee with the ſtrength of our Souls! O bleſſed are they that love thee, that are beloved by thee!

5. I might alſo inſiſt upon another Head of *Motives*, which is named in the Text, which is this, *Acquaint now thy ſelf with him, and thou ſhalt be at peace.* Though there be nothing but War on every ſide, you ſhall have peace. This peace of God, whatſoever you may think of it, is unſpeakably advantagious; the benefits that would accrue to a ſoul upon this peace are infinite; It is a *peace that paſſeth all underſtanding.* When we have this peace concluded, we may drive a brave Trade without diſturbance for the richeſt Commodities. If we were thus acquainted with God, we ſhall have ſuch a peace as that we may laugh at the ſhaking of the ſpear, and not be much diſturbed when we hear of dreadful things abroad in the World. He that is acquainted with God may ſafely venture up and down, he hath Gods paſs, a ſtrong man of war for his convoy; he hath ſuch powerful allies that he need not fear; as long as he is at peace with God, he is ſure not to be quite overcome by man. He is at peace with himſelf, when the Air ecchoes with Drums and Trumpets, and the roaring of Guns, a muſick that pleaſeth the Devils

devils Ear; He may ſtill rejoyce, becauſe he hath a bird within, which ſings ſweetly; there is a harmony between his will and Gods, a harmony between his heart and his mouth. This is no ſuch contemptible thing, and if you knew what a wounded Spirit, a fire in the boſom is, you would ſay ſo. This peace that ſuch a one hath, is a well-grounded peace; not ſuch a one as is built upon ignorance, and hardneſs of heart; but ſuch a peace as reſults from the ſence of the pardon of Sin, and Reconciliation with God, through the blood of Chriſt; that blood of Chriſt hath waſhed his conſcience from dead works. Sins he had, and hath, but ſome of them he ſees lying dead like the Egyptians upon the ſhore, others ſtriving for life, with a deaths wound upon them; and though he have enemies ſtill living, yet they are ſuch as ſhall never have the abſolute dominion over him: As long as the great quarrel between him and God is at an end, all is vvell enough, the Law hath nothing againſt him, all his accuſers are ſilenced; Chriſt hath fulfilled and ſatisfied the Law for him; The great Creator hath given a full and general acquittance, all debts are diſcharged for him, and therefore the man hath little reaſon to trouble his head much with cares and fears; now he may go up and down any where, and not fear the Serjeant, his noble ſurety hath paid that vaſt debt, he hath laid down the ten thouſand Talents upon the Nail, ſo that the man is at peace with God; he is alſo at peace with all the Creatures in the world, from the glorious Angels that are in Heaven, to the meaneſt inſect or plant; they are ſo far from doing him any real harm, that they all are Ser-

vants

vants to the Friends of God, they all ſtand ready to oppoſe their Enemies; and thoſe of them that are mortal are ready to lay down their lives for one that ſtands thus related to God. For vvhen any enters into Covenant vvith God, God alſo makes a Covenant for them vvith the beaſts of the field. Great peace have they that love Gods lavv, and nothing ſhall offend them; ſuch a one is at peace vvith Death and the Grave. We read of ſome profane Monſters that made a Covenant vvith Death, & vvere at an Agreement vvith Hell: but this Covenant vvill ſoon be broken, becauſe he that hath the keys of Death and Hell, the power of Life and Death, never ſubſcribed to the Articles of their Agreement. But novv the godly man hath a Friend that hath made a Covenant for him, a firm Covenant vvith Death, and Hell, ſo that none of them ſhall ever do him the leaſt vvrong. As for Death, Chriſt hath took out it's Sting; as for the Grave, Chriſt hath ſpiced, and ſeaſon'd it, it's Power is maſter'd, it's Terriblenes is taken away! It's novv no priſon, Chriſt hath opened the doors of it, and novv it is but a Chamber of repoſe, a bed to reſt in; and he that hath already Opened this Door, vvhen it vvas Bolted, Barr'd, and Double-locked, can and vvill ere long Open it again, and awaken his from their ſleep; and is this Inconſiderable? Is not ſuch a peace as this is, deſireable? Who that is vvell in his vvits, vvould not be glad to be in ſo ſecure a Condition as this peace vvill put him in? And vvho are like to have the benefit of this peace, but the Friends of God! O therefore if you value your ovvn peace, if you vvould be undiſturbed from ſtorms vvithout, & Heart-quakes vvithin;

within: If you would have all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth, at peace with you: If you would have Death unstung, and the Grave a Chamber, and not a Prison, why then, get acquainted with God, and you shall be at peace.

6. The next head of *Motives*, I might take from these words, *Thereby good shall come unto you*, *Acquaint your self with him, and be at peace, and thereby good shall come unto you*. But I shall here be but brief. Think of what you will that is good for you, and if you are acquainted with God, you shall have it for asking for; or that which is far better than that which you desire: For the Lord God is a Sun, and a Shield, he will give Grace and Glory, & no good thing will he with-hold from them which walk uprightly; that is, from those that are acquainted with him. All his ways are mercy and truth, to such as be in covenant with him; and all shall work together for good, to them that love him. Inlarge thy desires as wide as the Heavens, request what you will, ask never so much, and you shall have it; And what would you have more? If it be the good of profit that you desire; What greater gain than Godliness? Who can give such rewards to his Servants as God? Who will give greater Portions to his Children than this Father? Who is like to thrive better than he, who hath such a vast stock, such a great Trade, such quick and great returns; and above all, such a Partner? O that those that are all for profit and gain, that cry out, what advantage shall it be to me, if I serve God? and what profit to me, if I am acquainted with him? O that such would

but do that which will be most for their profit, I would desire no more of them than this. O that they would but try what a gainful Trade Religion in its power is! The greatest Merchants that ever walked the Exchange, if they be not acquainted with God, and have not Christ for their Factor, are but Pedlars to the Saints. One that is acquainted with God, gets more in one Hour, in one Prayer, at one Sermon, in one Meditation, than all the Rich Men of the World are worth, put all their Estates together: One receives his Peace, the other his Pounds; the one hath by way of Return, a great deal of troublesome Lumber, the other his Box of precious Pearls, and a Jewel of an infinite Value. O little doth the laborious Worlding think what poor and small Gains his are, when he gets most, to what this Spiritual Merchant gets; he would not tell what he gets sometimes in one Morning, for all the Riches of both the *Indies*. He Trades in such Commodities which will not suffer Damage upon the Sea: His Vessel is light and strong; the Master of it never made a losing Voyage. All his Wares are unvaluable; and though his Ship be in many a dreadful Storm, though sometimes she be becalm'd, though it be long before she returns; yet as long as she hath such Provisions with him, such a Pilot, such Anchors, she can't miscarry; she will come into the Harbour Richly Laden: The World will not believe this; but I am sure there is never a Man breathing, but will sooner say, That no Gain is like the Gain of Christ and Glory. One Return from Heaven, one Answer of Prayer, one Smile from God, one Look of Love, the Head of one *Goliah*, the Death of one Sin, one

Soul

soul brought home to Christ, one drooping soul comforted, is a greater Mercy (for all the ignorant vvorld make nothing of such things as these) than to be invested vvith the greatest Honours, than to be possessed of all the Riches, than to enjoy all the Pleasures that the vvhole World can afford. But O were mens eyes opened, vvere men within sight of those devouring Flames, then they vvould believe, that a Christ vvere vvorth the having, Grace a Pearl that cannot be over-valued, and that no Trade vvas comparable to a Spiritual Merchant, no Art like that, by vvhich one may turn every thing into Gold. But if it be the good of pleasure you look more after; can there be greater pleasures than those vvhich are in the presence of God? Can there be any greater pleasures, than to rejoyce in God, and to be made welcome by him, than to drink Flagons of that excellent Liquor, vvhich is better than vvine; Can there be better Musick, than to hear so many Millions of svveet Voyces singing *Halelujahs*! O there's a Confort! There's melody indeed! If you desire that other good, the good of Honesty, a rare accomplishment, perfection of Grace, purity of Soul; vvherevvithall shall a young man dresse his vvays, but by taking heed thereto, according to his word. Well then, lay all these *Motives* together, and let's see whether they will any whit prevail. If the nature of the person with whom I would fain have you acquainted, if all these admirable qualities that are in him (if I may so call them) may signifie any thing; if all those glorious effects of acquaintance with God weigh any thing with you, one would think by this time you should be well resolved. If the

danger of not being acquainted with God, may make you afraid of ſtanding it out; if Good or Evil, if Peace or War, if Life or death, If all this be as much as nothing, what then is ſomething? If the frequent pleading of Mercy, if the Blood of Chriſt have any Voice, if the Expoſtulations of his Embaſſadors may be Heard, Why ſhould you not then be Perſwaded? If all this will not move you what can we ſay more? If we could ſhew you Heaven, and the Glories of another World, could we let you ſee the Face of Chriſt, could we any way in the world reach your Hearts, and perſwade you by any means to mind the things of Eternal peace, we would do it with all our Hearts. If we were ſure to get you with us, and to bring you Acquainted with God, we could willingly come begging on our bare knees to you, and beſeech you to be reconciled to God. We ſee that diſmal day a coming, and are grieved to think, what a ſad taking you will be in then; we know the caſe will then be altered with them, which will not be perſwaded to be reconciled to God. O what a woful condition will they be in, which have heard or read theſe Sermons, and yet for all that, would not mind the looking after acquaintance with God! How will ſuch wiſh that they had never been born, or that they had their being in ſome of the dark ſavage corners of the World, where they might never have heard of the Doctrine of Reconciliation, being Acquainted with God, and Union with Chriſt, Peace with their Offended Maker, rather than having heard of theſe things to make light of them! O to hear of ſuch a Friend, and to have him for an Enemy; to hear of Peace, and to chooſe War;

to hear of Heaven, and go to Hell, this is sad indeed. It would have been far better for such, that they had never known the ways of God, than after they had known them, to go in the ways of Folly. O that men and women had but such serious thoughts of these things as they will have ere long! O that they would but believe Heaven, and Hell, and Eternity to be such Realities as shortly they will! O that mens hearts were but affected with things, as they will be when their Souls are just a going, or a little after they are in another World! But O the miserable condition of the World! O the lamentable state of Professors, that make no more of the favour or displeasure of God! Nay, may I not say, O the Folly of the Children of God themselves, that are no more in Gods Company, when they know they may be so welcome, when they have tasted so oft of his kindness, when they were made so much of the last time that they gave him a Visit. Are not men in a deep sleep, that they do not hear? Are they not blind, that they do not see? Are they not Ignorant, Foolish, and Mad, that they do not understand their interest any better? It is not without good reason, that the Spirit of God doth so oft cry out upon sinners for their Folly; the Scripture saith not in vain, *That there is none that hath understanding, no not one.* No wonder that they which have but half a cure, see men like Trees; that those which never had a through work, do not prize Christ. O but that those which have been brought Nigh by Grace, who were sometimes afar off, that such should be so much strangers; for those that have met with such kind Entertainment at his house, for

theſe to keep off ſo, to come ſo ſeldom, for them vvhich have Fed ſo High at the Kings Table, to fall to their Traſh, their Husks, this is a ſhame indeed; as if the Devil kept a better Houſe than God. Chriſtians, doth God deſerve this at your hands? How unkindly do you think he takes this from you? What vvill the World ſay? Look how his own Acquaintance deſpiſe him? How vvill the Devil inſult? O how do the Hearts of your fellow Chriſtians ake, to ſee how ſtrange your Carriage is? How do they tremble to think, vvhat if that fine Houſe be Built upon the Sands? Chriſtians, you vvhich ſeldom or complementally Viſit God, bethink your ſelves vvell what you do, vvhen you began to be cold in your Affections to this Friend; remember from whence you are fallen, and repent, and do your firſt Works; remember vvhat entertainment you have ſometimes had at Gods Houſe; forget not all his Kindneſſes; of all the Creatures in the World, you have no cauſe to carry your ſelves ſo towards God. I tell you again, the World ſtands by, and looks on, to ſee vvhat there is in you more than in others; they mark your lives more than you are aware of, it may be: Wherefore look to your ſelves, take heed how you carry your ſelves before them. O vvhy ſhould they ſee your faces pale, vvhen you may feed ſo highly? O ſhew them by your Countenance, that you feed upon vvholeſome Food! O let your Breath ſmell ſweet, let your Diſcourſe be more ſavoury of the things of God! Labour to maintain a ſweet, conſtant, unintermitted intercourſe

ſcourſe vvith God, to vvalk with him. O Sirs do you think vvhat you loſe by your coming ſo ſeldome to this Friend. I appeal to your own Experience; vvas not that diſh you eat laſt at his Table ſweet? And what do you think that God doth not ſtill keep as good a Houſe as he did? Do you believe that he hath ſpent all his beſt Wines? Can that Fountain ever be emptied? Is there not Bread and good Chear enough in your Fathers houſe? Believe it, God hath other kind of Entertainment, Richer Chear, better Fare ſtill to make you welcome with, if you would not be ſo ſtrange, if you would but come oftener to him. As for Chriſtians, methinks I need not uſe ſo many vvords to perſwade you, methinks you that knovv hovv ſweet his company is, ſhould deſire to be never out of it. Chriſtians, I tell you plainly, if you ever expect true peace in your Life, and true joy and comfort at Death, it's your only way to keep cloſe to God, viſit him oft by ſecret Prayer and other kind of Duties, and then you ſhall ever and anon meet vvith that vvhich will ſweeten your greateſt diligence, and abundantly make amends for your pains. Knock at his door, ask for him, and reſolve to ſtay till he comes; though he come not at the firſt, ſecond, or third knocking, yet I am ſure he is within, and will come at laſt, if you will but vvait; and when you have once again met with him, O let him not go, but tell him ſeriouſly that you can't bear his abſence, he ſhall be your God and Friend living and dying, death it ſelf ſhall not part you. Go alſo and tell your

Friends, you have found him whom your Soul loves, that you have met vvith Jeſus, and ſee if you can get them too, to come out and ſee him, bid them to taſte and ſee how good the Lord is; commend him all you can to your poor Chriſt-leſs Friends. But you are not the perſons that I intended to ſpeak to, only thus a little by the by, that I may a little vvarm my own heart and yours in this great duty of maintaining an intimate cloſe converſe and acquaintance vvith God. But my buſineſs is to go out into the High-ways and Hedges, and to invite poor vvandring ſtrangers that have nothing to live upon themſelves, and that do not know vvhat a noble open-houſe God keeps, that never taſted of his kindneſs in Chriſt, to come to this Royal Feaſt, and to Eat their fill of ſuch food as they can never eat too much of, never be ſurfeited with. *Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is unto the ſons of men. O ye ſimple ones, underſtand wiſdom, and ye fools, be ye of an underſtanding heart,* Prov. 8. 4, 5. *Hear O ye deaf, and ſee O blind: let the dead hear the voice of God, and live.* Then hear vvhat I have been ſpeaking of: I have almoſt done my meſſage, conſider vvell of theſe things, as you tender the diſpleaſure of God, as you value your Souls, be ſerious; remember vvhat it is, that I have been diſcourſing to you about; Read it over again, and ſtudy on it; Read and Pray, Pray and Read, and turn this exhortation into Prayer; take vvith you Words, and ſay: O that this might be the Sermon that might bring me acquainted vvith God! O that this might be the man that might bring me to ſome knowledg of Chriſt! O that this might be the happy day vvherein a Match

may

may be concluded between my ſoul, and the pre-
cious Jeſus! But alaſs, alaſs, vvhere are the
hearts that are thus ſmitten? Where are the Souls
that are any vvhit taken vvith this infinite Beauty?
How few have any real love or good-will for
Chriſt? O vvho hath believed our Report, and
to vvhom is the Arm of the Lord revealed? Though
I and many hundreds more, have been pleading
thus vvith Sinners; though ſome of their Em-
baſſadors of Peace vveep bitterly, that their meſ-
ſage is no more kindly entertained, though their
publick Preaching be followed vvith private Pray-
ers and ſecret Groans; though they expoſtulate the
caſe vvith poor refractory Creatures, vvith all the
earneſtneſs that they can for their Lives, though
vve uſe the moſt powerful Arguments that vve
can, and deliver them vvith all the Vehemency,
Seriouſneſs and Compaſſion that vve can for our
Souls; Yet how are the greateſt part of our hear-
ers unconcerned? Is not a great part of our Au-
ditory as ſtupid and ſenſeleſs as the very Stones
they tread on? The more is our ſorrow; vve
fear as to the moſt of them that hear us, vvhat
vve ſpeak, is loſt. It may be they may be a little
affected juſt at the hearing, or for an hour or tvvo;
but O that theſe Truths might have a lively, and
abiding impreſſion on mens hearts! I fear, O
that they vvere cauſeleſs Fears! I fear that moſt
of you that have heard of theſe things vvill go
avvay, and quickly forget vvhat vveighty things
you have heard; perhaps ſome of you may ſay,
the man vvas very earneſt, and ſome of his Ex-
preſſions vvere piercing. O Friends, I hope it is
not your commendation that I deſire? O that
I may vvith a ſingle heart, reſpect Gods Glory! I

ſay

ſay again, I vvould not be pleaſed vvith your praiſe, nor would I fear your diſpraiſe; its your Souls I vvant, and may but I manage my great vvork in this ſucceſsfully, and ſee you acquainted with God, before I leave you for ever, I hope I ſhould be contented to be trod in the dirt. O that my heart may not deceive me! O that my compaſſion to your Souls were greater, a thouſand times greater! O that I could never ſpeak to you of ſuch things as theſe without tears. I muſt again, and again, profeſs I am aſhamed of my heart, that it is no more ſenſible of theſe weighty affairs! But O Mighty and Glorious God, if thou pleaſeſt, thou canſt out of the mouth of a Babe and Suckling, ordain ſtrength! O that thou wouldeſt make the worm *Jacob* to threſh Mountains! O that thou wouldeſt make uſe of the moſt unworthy and weakeſt inſtrument, in that honourable Service of bringing home ſome Souls to thy ſelf. O if but any one Soul, if but one Soul that was eſtranged from God, might by theſe lines be brought acquainted with him, if I might prevail with any other ſtubborn Enemy to lay down his vveapons, and be Friends with him, I ſhould think my pains well beſtowed; though (if that will make you to regard it ever the more) this work hath coſt me many an hours ſtudy, and it hath been interrupted with many Bodily Diſtempers, Groans and Sorrows, Fears and Sighs. Yet if after all my travel, I may hear of any Children born of God; if I may meet but one Soul the better for it, by it brought to Glory, I ſhall have abundant cauſe to bleſſe my God, and to rejoyce that my labour hath not been in vain in the Lord. But if I might have

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more, I ſhould have more cauſe to adore infinite Goodneſs, and rich Grace! O my dear Friends! O precious and immortal Souls! What ſhall I ſay to you? What ſhall I do for you? O did you but knovv hovv hardly I fetch my Breath at this time, did you but ſee vvhat a crazy Creature he is that vvrites to you; did you but knovv hovv faint he hath been ſometimes in ſpeaking to you, you vvould go nigh to pitty him. O pitty your ſelves! O pitty your ovvn Souls, that ere long muſt be turned naked out of your Bodies, and hear the Expoſtulations of a dying man that vvould gladly Live vvith you in everlaſting Glory, and meet you all among the Friends of the Bridegroom, that I may ſee you among the Sons of God, in your great meeting, when the Father ſhall ſend his Servants the Angels to fetch all his Children home to his own Houſe. O pitty your Souls, and let not all my pains be loſt, trample not under your Feet the blood of the Covenant, neither count it a common thing: Remember that the ſlighting of Chriſt is a dangerous thing; the loſs of his Favour, and the loſs of your Soul, muſt go together! O how ſhall I leave you! How ſhall I part with you, ſhall I go before my work is done? What ſhall I ſay more? What arguments ſhall I further make uſe of? O that I knew vvhat to ſay, that I might prevail! And are you ſtill reſolved to put me off vvith frivolous Excuſes? Can you put off your Conſciences thus? Are you ſtill contented to be Aliens and Strangers? If you are, know this, that I muſt leave theſe Lines to bear Witneſs againſt you; Remember this, that you vvere told of theſe things again and again. Thoſe that can forget Sermons

here

here, ſhall remember them hereafter? If you be not the better for this diſcourſe, you will curſe the day that ever you heard it; it will be a cutting reflection, vvhen another day you ſhall ſay to your own Soul, at ſuch a time, ſuch a one did beſeech me in Chriſts ſtead to be reconciled to God, and I vvould not: Curſed man that I vvas! I made nothing of all the offers of Grace and Mercy, I made little account of theſe intollerable Torments vvhich now make me to gnaſh my Teeth Hear, O unhappy Creature, that are yet alive, Be not ye paſt hope! O that thou mayeſt ſee thy ſad ſtate before it be quite paſt remedy! O let me take up a Lamentation for thee, as one whoſe condition is beyond Expreſſion Deplorable! O that I could ſpeak as affectionately to you as one did lately, vvho ſpent his ſtrength and life amongſt you all, *viz.* That I can neither eat nor drink, nor ſleep quietly, whilſt I think of the danger that precious Souls run every moment, vvhile they are unacquainted vvith God! O that mine eyes vvere Waters, and my Head a Fountain of Tears, that I might vveep day and night for poor Chriſt-leſs Creatures, that laugh and are as chearful as if no danger vvere near them, vvhereas that diſmal Day approaches apace, vvherein they muſt bid an everlaſting farewel to all their Pleaſures, and lie down for ever under the ſcalding Wrath of an angry God! O ſtand aſtoniſhed O Heavens, and Wonder O Earth! Here's a man that had rather be a Beaſt than a man, a Devil than a Saint, that prefers Hell before Heaven, that loves Death and hates Life; Here's a man that makes nothing of going to Hell, Damnation is a thing that he jeſts vvich; 'tis but

damning

damning, he saith: But damning! Is that so light a thing, a thing to be laughed at? Well, if that damning be nothing, never complain of it, when you feel it: If it be nothing, never groan nor bite your Tongue, nor Gnash your Teeth for it; If Heaven, and your Soul, the Favour of God, eternal happiness, be such small matters, never complain for the loss of them. Well then, belike you are pleased very well with your choise, and you do choose rather to enjoy the pleasures of Sin, for a moment, than the pleasures of Holiness, which last for ever. There stands a Sinner that hears all this, and Frets and Foameth at the Hearing of it; it's a Torture to his Soul to be within the sound of such Truths? Why, act like one in his wits: If the hearing of Hell and Damnation be so troublesome, what will the feeling of it be think'st thou? But that I may, if possible, prevail, I shall leave a few serious questions with you, which I charge you in the presence of God, seriously to consider of, and to give a wise answer to these following Questions.

Quest. 1. Are those things which you have heard, true, or are they not? Doth not the Scriptures speak the same things which I do? Dare you say that the Word of Truth is False? Do but open the Bible, dip where you will, what is that you read there? Is it not something that hath a Tendency to what I have been teaching you? O that you would but give your selves the trouble of searching the Scriptures, to see whether these things are so. To what purpose do you think should we spend our breath? To what purpose should we follow you with such Exhortations, if we had not some grounds for what

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we ſay? If there be no ſuch thing in the word of God, why then do you not ſay ſo? Why, do you not ſhew us it, if there be ſuch a place that ſaith, there is no need of repentance, that mans condition is ſafe enough already, and that he may do well enough, though he be never reconciled to God? Do you think that we take delight in vexing men and women? Do you conceive that it pleaſeth us to diſpleaſe you, and to get your hatred? Do you not believe that a great many of us, if it might conſiſt with Gods honour and your welfare, had not far rather be excuſed? Can any man imagine that ſo many thouſands of Prophets, Apoſtles, and Miniſters, in ſuch diſtant ages, and in ſuch diſtant places, ſhould all agree in this, to impoſe a falſity upon the world? Would any man be ſo mad as to invent ſuch things as theſe, which are ſo contrary to mens diſpoſitions, if he had not abundant warrant from God himſelf? Is it poſſible that men ſhould make ſuch complaints, and ſhed ſo many tears, and be in ſuch agonies about theſe things, if there were nothing at all in them? Are all the experiences of ſo many thouſands of Saints, but meer fancies? Speak Chriſtian, ſpeak, What do you ſay to this? Are all thy joys, thy anſwers of Prayers, thoſe ſweet diſhes that thou haſt ſometimes fed upon, but dreams? Doth not thy very blood ſtir in thee, at the very putting ſuch a queſtion to thee? Canſt thou not ſay, that thou haſt ſeen, that thou haſt felt, and that thou haſt known undoubtedly, that Spiritual things are realities, the greateſt realities in the world, and that thou haſt been as much affected with them as ever thou wert with the things of ſenſe? Let me, the meaneſt

greatest of ten thousand, tell the stiffest Atheist in the world, that I have seen these things so realized, that I shall sooner believe that I am turned to a stone, or am dead, than believe that Spirituals are nullities and fancies. I am confident if there be any credit to be given to both eyes and ears, then these things are true; and had you seen but what I have seen in dying Saints, and heard what I have heard, you would easily have been convinced, that there is something in communion with God, something in Spiritual Joys. I am sure, if there be any truth in the Scriptures, if the word of God be true, if Christ and the Apostles were not all mistaken, then these things are true. If I should tell you a business that did concern your House, or your Children, or Body, or any worldly thing whatever, upon my own personal knowledg, would you not readily assent to what I say? I am perswaded you would be far from suspecting the truth of what I affirmed; I am ready to think, that there is none of you all that think that I dare tell you that which is false. O then, Why will you not believe me in a business of far greater Consequence? And if you ask me to what purpose do I spend so much time for nothing? What need I speak at this rate? What, will I make Infidels of you all? What, do I think that you are such Atheists, as not to believe that the word of God is true? Well then, you your selves are witnesses that the word of God is true, and that you do believe all that is contained in it; and by rational inferences deduced from it: I shall therefore take it for granted, that you give your assent to these things, if you be Christians by profession, your very Name speaks as much;

much. Novv my next Queſtion ſhall be this.

Queſt. 2. Are theſe things of vveight and importance, or are they not? You hear that they are matters that concern your Eternal Life or Death, Soul affairs; and are not theſe matters of the greateſt conſequence? If acquaintance vvith God, the happineſs or miſery of a Soul, your making or undoing for ever, be inconſiderable things, What then are great things? Is it a matter of greater importance, to loſe the ſight of a laſcivious Play? Is it an affair of greater vveight to have the frowns of a vvanton miſtriſs, or the frown of a God? You ſaid even novv, that the vvord of God vvas true, if you vvill ſtand to that, I deſire no more; Hovv is it vvritten? Read a verſe or two, turn to Matthevv 5. 20. *Except your righteouſneſs exceed the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, you ſhall in no caſe enter into the Kingdom of Heaven:* And John. 3. 3. *Except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the Kingdom of God.* And God vvill pour out his vvrath upon the Heathen, and upon the Families that call not upon his Name. Doth not the Scripture ſay, that is the one thing neceſſary? Are not theſe things called by the Lord Chriſt, the vveightier things? *Mat.* 23. 23. I hope you vvill not ſay, that God is miſtaken, and that the Scripture ſpeaks more of theſe matters than needs: What are you gone from your vvord ſo ſoon; did not you ſay that the vvord of God vvas true, and are you novv of another mind, becauſe you find that it requires more ſtrictneſs, you are vvilling to ſubmit to? But are you aſhamed of that, and are you convinced of this alſo, that the Doctrine of

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conciliation, Acquaintance, and Peace with God, are affairs of the higheſt importance in the World? And do you indeed believe this? and will you ſtand to it? Well then, my next Queſtion ſhall be this.

Queſt. 3. What do you mean then to mind ſuch things as you acknowledge to be moſt unqueſtionably true, and of the greateſt conſequence, with ſo much indifferency and coldneſs? What reaſon have you then for your ſtrange negligence in your proſecution of them? What, ſay they, are the greateſt things in the World, and will you ſay they are leaſt to be looked after? Is it any Prudence and Wiſdom to be very ſerious about trifles, and to trifle about the moſt ſerious things? Are Heaven, the love of God, and the like, by your own confeſſion the moſt weighty, and will you make light of them? O folly and hypocriſie! *Out of thy own mouth thou ſhalt be condemned.* Doſt know that Heaven and Hell are before you? Doſt thou know that the one is unſpeakably glorious, and the other unſpeakably dreadful? and yet for all this doſt thou ſtand demurring which of theſe thou ſhouldeſt chooſe? and dareſt thou for all this venture on in a way which leads to the region of Eternal Darkneſs? and though thoſe that know the way better than you, and ſee you ride on ſo haſtily and merrily, call after you with earneſtneſs, yet doſt thou ſtill turn thy back upon them? Conſider whether you act in theſe affairs, like one that is well in his wits. Is God the beſt friend in the World and yet his kindneſs leaſt to be regarded? Man, what haſt thou to ſay for thy ſelf? O What bruits, and how irrational are men in their ſpiritual matters! How

do they contradict themselves! How do they say one thing, and do the quite contrary! O let me in a word or two renew my Expostulation with them which are loath to be accounted fools! What reason hast thou to undervalue the favour of God so as you do? What reason have you thus foolishly to cast away your selves, and to slight acquaintance with your Maker? Let me plead with you in the language of a Reverend Divine (*R. B.*) of our own. Look up your best and strongest Reasons; and if you see a man put his hand into the fire till it burn off, you'l marvel at it: but this is a thing that a man may have reason for, as Bishop *Cranmer* had when he burnt off his hand for subscribing to Popery. If you see a man cut off a Leg or an Arm, it's a sad sight; but this is a thing that a man may have good reason for, as many a man doth it to save his life. If you see a man give his body to be burnt to ashes, and to be tormented with Strappado's and Racks, and refuse deliverance when it is offered: this is a hard case to flesh and blood, but this a man may have good reason for, as you see in *Heb.* 11. 33, 34, 35, 36. and as many an hundred Martyrs have done. But for a man to forsake the Lord that made him, for a man to run into the fire of Hell when he is told of it, and intreated to turn that he might be saved; this is a thing that can have no reason in it, that is reason indeed, to justifie or excuse it. For Heaven will pay for the loss of any thing that we can lose to get it, or for any labour that we bestow for it; but nothing can pay for the loss of Heaven. Read on in Mr. *R——'s Call to the Unconverted*, pag. 169. Do you still believe the Word of God to

be true, & the things contained in it to be the most weighty, and yet will you still pass them over, as if there were nothing at all in them?

Quest. 4. My next Question that I shall propound to you, and desire your serious and speedy answer to, is this, Do you believe that you can find a better friend then God? can you mend your self any where else? Is there in Heaven or Earth any that can do as much for you as God can? Is there any one that can take you off when you come to be accused for High Treason against the King of Heaven, and to be arraigned before that just Judge? have you got that which will suit your cost in getting of it, and countervail the loss of a Soul? What is it that still hath an interest in your heart, that is thought to be an equal competitor with God for your dearest love? Is it be indeed that which will shield you from the arrests of Death, and the wrath of the Almighty; if it be that which can shelter you from the storm of his displeasure; if it be that which will do you as much good as Heaven, and make you as happy as God can; Why then I have little to say; make your best of it. But consider well what you do first, be sure that you be not mistaken; have not many thought as you think, and have found their mistake when it was too late?

Quest. 5. Do you think that this world will last always with you? Do you not believe that ere long you must die, and your soul appear before God, and by him be sentenced to its everlasting state? Where is all the glory of those great Monarchs which despised God, and oppressed his people? what is become of all their pomp? which

of them that flouriſhed three thouſand years a
ſtand alive now in glory? And are you better tha
they? Shall the worms which have made a pre
of them, ſpare you? Is Death more favourabl
now-a-days, than he was before? Is not the Worl
ſtill as it was, but Vanity? Is not all fleſh ſtill bu
graſs, and the beauty of it as a flower that is c
down and withereth ſuddenly? Well then, thi
being granted, that nothing is more certain tha
Death, and that it is appointed for all men on
to die, would you not then be glad of ſometh
that will ſtand you inſtead after death, a Friend in a
nother World? Why then do you not ſpeedily ge
acquainted with him who alone can be-friend yo
in that dreadful hour?

Queſt. 6. What do you think will become o
you, if after all this you go on in your old ways
What will become of you do you think if yo
ſhould die without the knowledge of God? Wha
hopes have you of life in peace, if you bid de
fiance to the Lord of life, and contemn the Princ
of peace? How ſhall you eſcape if you neglect ſ
great Salvation? What do you think that tho
which did once as you do now, ſlight Chriſt, an
never look after Reconciliation with God, a
now a doing in another World? What woul
you do in this caſe? Should one come to you e
ther out of Heaven, or out of Hell, how wo
derfully do you think you ſhould be affecte
with the Narration which they would give yo
of the affairs of the inviſible World? Why the
will you not now be affected with what we ſay
for aſſure your ſelves, whatever you may think
our teſtimony is as true, and hath a better foun
dation of credit, than if one ſhould tell you h

come from the dead, and speak to you of these things.

Quest. 7. Another Question I would propound to you, is this; Are you willing to bear the displeasure of God? can you undergo the weight of that wrath which made his back to ake, who was mighty to do and suffer? can you with any patience hear that dreadful Word pronounced by the mouth of that Judge, which will see to the execution of his sentence, *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting torment; Depart from me ye workers of iniquity, for I know you not?* Can you endure without any trouble that scalding hot wrath which is abundantly more painful than Fire and Brimstone, more intollerable than to be shut up in a burning fiery Furnace, or to be boyled in a Caldron of melted Lead, or whatsoever torments the Wit of men or Devils can invent? Can you with any patience bear the Stone, Gout, Toothach, Chollick, or some such distempers of body which last but for a while? O how long do you think the time when you are in that condition? How do you toss and tumble? What lamentable moan do you make? Do not you think you can't be too much pitied in that condition? How then will you be able to lie down in those torments, the least drop of which is abundantly more painful than the greatest torment that ever you felt in your life? If these seem dreadful to you, Why do you not go the way to avoid them? which is by getting an interest in him who hath the Keys of Hell at his girdle; for there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, to them that are brought into a state of Reconciliation and acquaintance with God by his Son our Mediator.

Queſt. 8. Are you contented to loſe everlaſting happineſs? Can you willingly ſee *Abraham*, and *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, and a great many from all the quarters of the world, to ſit down in the Kingdom of Heaven, and your ſelves caſt out? How do you like to have thoſe which you ſcorned to look upon, to be ſet at the Table at the Feaſt, and your ſelf ſhut out with the Dogs? would you not be glad to have a word of comfort ſpoke to you, when your ſoul is juſt a taking its leave of your body? Would you not be glad then to be conveyed by the bleſſed Angels into the preſence of God, and to be crowned with an immortal and glorious Crown? Would it do you any harm to be perfect in holineſs and happineſs when you die? Would you not be glad to be ſaved when others ſhall be damned? In a word, do you not deſire to be rejoycing and praiſing of God in endleſs pleaſures, when others ſhall be weeping and curſing of God in endleſs torments? Why then do not you live the lives of the righteous if you would die their deaths, and have your latter end like theirs? if you would be glorious and happy for ever, why do you not endeavour to be holy and ſpiritual in time? if you would have God your friend in another world, what do you mean that you labour no more to be acquainted with him in this world?

Queſt 9. How would you take it at any mans hands, to be ſerved as you ſerve God? Suppoſe you ſhould take up a poor Child that came to your door to beg, that had ſcarce a rag to cover his nakedneſs, nor a Morſel of bread to put into his mouth, and no where to hide his head; Suppoſe you ſhould ſtrip this poor beggar of his rags,

and

cloath him in every good apparrel, and take into your own house, and take as much care of him, as if he were your own child: suppose after this, you should bid him do you some small piece of service, and he in stead of it, should say, *Command your man, and do your work your self*; and instead of answering your kindness, should offer you the greatest abuse in the world, and afterwards conspire with a company of Rogues to rob and murther you, how would you like this? should you think that such a fellow as this did not deserve a halter rather then your favour? But now, if after this you should send after this ungrateful wretch, and tell him, that you are willing to forget all that is past, and to receive him into the greatest favour, and never to cast his former wickedness in his teeth; how would you take it at his hands, if he should stand I know not how long disputing whether he should accept of your kindness or no, whether he should choose the Gaol, and Gallows, or your House? but if after all this you should send messenger after messenger, and offer to give him all that you have in the World, and to bestow your only Daughter upon him, and to settle presently a great Estate upon him with her; how would you take it if this vile, ungrateful beggar should put you off a great while together with some poor excuse or other? How would you like it if he should make light of all your offers, and tell you he thanks your for nothing, and should undervalue your kindness? Would you not soon resolve not to trouble your self any longer with such an unthankful monster? Would you not let him take his course, and not much pity him, if he afterwards see the difference

ference between a Fathers houſe and a Gaol, between Liberty and a Priſon, between Riches, Glory and Pleaſure, and Poverty, Diſhonour and Sorrows? Would you not bid him never expect kindneſs more at your hands; but ſeeing he would not be ruled, to take what follows? What do you ſay, would you not do thus? I am perſwaded you would. But ſhould I unriddle this Parable, who do you think would be condemned? Your own mouth would accuſe you, and you would be your own Judge. Thou art that man that haſt dealt thus diſingeniouſly with God, thou art that beggar to whom the Lord hath ſhewed much kindneſs, and offered more; he hath ſent Meſſenger after Meſſenger, and at laſt he hath ſent his Son to invite thee to his own houſe, and he offers to make you as happy as Heaven, Glory, and happineſs it ſelf can make you, and you ſtand ſtill demurring, and add one delay to another, and are far from that grateſull and ſpeedy compliance which the nature of the thing doth require; and in ſtead of coming at Gods call, and a thankful owning of his marvellous kindneſs, how baſely doſt thou prefer thy company, thy luſt before him, and offer the moſt intollerable affronts to his Majeſty, and make nothing of his unparalel'd goodneſs, and continueſt in open rebellion againſt him? What then haſt thou to ſay for thy ſelf, why God ſhould not with a juſt abhorrency caſt thee off for ever? But now that God ſhould ſtill offer thee as high as ever, and (in ſtead of doing as I have ſaid, and as you your ſelf would have done in caſe of a leſs contempt) ſtill follow you with ſuch a gracious propoſal as this is, that I now make unto you;

not a Miracle of mercy, a prodigy of kind-
ness?

Queſt. 10. And now what will you do? Will you ſtill for all this go on in your contempt of God? Will you ſtill refuſe to know him, and never mind acquaintance with him? Will you ſtill be indifferent whether you have God for your Friend, or your enemy? Now you have been tendred ſuch a match, will you make another choice, will you beſtow your heart ſomewhere elſe? And when you have done that, dare you ſtand to your choice, and ſay, that you have done very wiſely in refuſing God, and in imbracing this preſent World? Will you maintain it at the day of judgment, that you have done well to refuſe acquaintance with himſelf, and to run the hazard of his diſpleaſure? But you will not, you ſay, trouble your head with ſuch melancholy fancies as theſe are; they are enough to put a man beſides his Wits; you hope to do as well as others, and ſo long you care not. Well then, it ſeems you are reſolved; though, let me tell you, if you are contented to fare as moſt ſhall fare at laſt, you muſt be contented to be damned; for the Scripture is exceeding clear in this, that the number of thoſe that go to Heaven, is a very ſmall number; and if you will not take my word for it, (for indeed I would not that you ſhould take my word, nor any mans breathing without warrant from Gods word, in things of ſo high a nature) look into the Scripture, and at your leiſure, ponder a while upon theſe following Texts, *Luke* 13. 23, 24. *Then ſaid one unto him, Lord, are there few that ſhall be ſaved? And he ſaid unto them, Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate; for*

many

many I ſay unto you, will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able, Mat 20. 16. *Many are called, but few are choſen.* And *Luke* 12 32. Chriſt ſaith, his flock is a little flock. And the Church complains of the fewneſs of her number in this Language. *Mic.* 7 1. *Wo is me, for I am as when they have gathered the ſummer fruits.* I might heap up abundance of Scriptures, of the ſame nature, all which ſpeak this to us; that it is not ſo common a thing to go to Heaven as moſt people reckon upon. But yet if thou be reſolved, come what will come, not to change your mind; if after ſo many warnings and pleadings, you ſtill continue of this judgement; I muſt ſpeak a dreadful Word: Your blood be upon your own Soul. I have blown the Trumpet, I have done what in me lies to convince thee of thy dangerous ſtate, while thou art a ſtranger to God, and to bring thee to a ſpeedy acquaintance with him; but thou haſt after many and many a tender, given in this anſwer, that as for God, thou doſt not deſire to be acquainted with him; as for your matching with his Son, it's that which thou careſt not for hearing of, except thou mighteſt have his eſtate without his Soveraignty; thou wilt not have him for thy Husband, except he will let thee do as thou liſt, and run a Whoring from him when thou pleaſeſt; Thou wilt not have Heaven, except thou mayſt have is without Holineſs; and as for the invitations of God, thou ſtill makeſt light of them, neither promiſes nor threatnings ſignifie much with you. Well then, when you find by Woful experience what you have done, know whom you muſt lay all the blame on. I call Heaven and Earth to record, and you your ſelves are witneſſes

, that I have with all the pity and earneſt-
ſs that I could for my ſoul told you of theſe
great things: but you think the flattering offers
that the Devil makes, to be more advantagious
then thoſe which God makes, and his ſervice to
be preferred before the ſervice of Chriſt, and the
Friendſhip of the world to be eſteemed before the
Friendſhip of God, and the pleaſures of ſin, which
are but for a ſeaſon, you value before thoſe ri-
vers of pleaſures which are at the right hand of
God for evermore. Now, if you continue in this
mind, blame not me if you miſcarry for ever;
you muſt whether you will or no ſtand to your
choice. Do not ſay but you were told of theſe
things; this is not the firſt time by many, but it
may be the laſt that you may ever hear for ought
that I know. Remember you were once well of-
fered. Do you think that God will always bare
with ſuch unworthy abuſes? ſhall Gods Juſtice
never be righted? Yes, yes, be not deceived,
ſlighted kindneſſes will coſt dear at laſt. What
have you yet to ſay for your ſelf? Do you think
that I mean you any hurt by all this? except you
count Salvation a wrong, and kindneſs it ſelf an
injury. But if all this will not do, go then and
make the beſt thou canſt of all thy Friends; let
us ſee how well, and how long they will enter-
tain thee: ere a few dayes, it may be, ſhall be at an
end, we ſhall hear how you like your choice;
when they ſhall turn you out of doors, and tell
you plainly, they can do nothing for you, you
muſt ſhift as well as you can; as for them, they
can't provide for themſelves, much leſs for you.
And then let's ſee who hath made the beſt choice,
he that is acquainted with God, and choſen him
for

ſor his Friend, or he that hath taken the World for his Friend? Let's ſee who will do moſt for their Friends, when a time of trial comes. When Heaven and Earth are all in a Flame, when the Trumpet is ſounding, when the Judge and his Attendants, Chriſt and all his Holy Angels, are coming, when the Priſons the Graves are opened, and the Priſoners are brought forth, then let's ſee who will have the chearfulleſt Countenance, he that holdeth up his hand at the bar, or they that ſit upon the bench with the Judge: for know you not that the Saints, the Friends of the Judge, ſhall ſit with him when he judgeth the World? We ſhall know when the ſtorm riſeth whoſe houſe was beſt, that which was built upon the ſand, or that which was built upon the Rock. O that people were now of the ſame mind that they will be of at the day of Judgement! O that they would conſider, that if they will not now be at leiſure to think of theſe things, they ſhall be at leiſure to repent of them hereafter. Do not talk of ſcorns, and reproaches, and ſuffering; what, do you think that Heaven will not make amends for all that? Which is moſt to be feared, the ſcorns of God, or the ſcorns of men? Which will do you moſt hurt, mans contempt, or Gods? Where is the man that will be laughed out of a great eſtate? Becauſe a fool ſaith, that a Jewel is not worth the taking up, will you therefore never ſtoop to take it up? The truth of it is, if you intend to make any thing of your Profeſſion, you muſt be willing to be counted a fool, and a mad man: but you muſt remember, it is by thoſe that are ſo themſelves. O be not affrighted from your duty by the talk of the rabble. If the

thing

thing be evil, let the vice of it ſcare you; but if it be good, let not the fear of them which are very incompetent judges in ſuch a caſe divert you from it. Do you think that ſuch poor excuſes will be taken at the day of Judgement? What do you intend to ſay to God then? Lord, I would have laboured to have known thee, I would have taken ſome care of my ſoul, and I would have taken ſome pains about the things of Eternity, but that I ſaw that almoſt every one that did with any ſeriouſneſs look after ſuch matters, were ſcorned, and laughed at, &c. When I had got into the company of thoſe that were godly, and I had half a mind to go with them to Heaven, then my Friends fell a jeering of me, and ask'd me whether I meaned to be mad, to undo my ſelf, to turn Puritan and Phanatick? Do you, I ſay, believe that ſuch a plea will ſtop the mouth of the Judge, and keep him from pronouncing the ſentence againſt you? Will this hold the hands of Juſtice? Will the thoughts of this quench or cool the dreadfull flames? Be better adviſed, O be better adviſed for your ſouls ſake, and conſider how ſuch creatures will befool themſelves. Who would upon ſuch a trifle part with Heaven? That would be laughed out of Glory, and jeered into Hell? Is your mind yet altered? Have you any thoughts or reſolutions to look after your ſoul and acquaintance with God? Are there none of you all that ask by this time, what ſhall I do to be acquainted with God? Are there none of you that begin to think that it is high time to look out for a Friend in a time of need? have I all this while been beating the air, and laboured in Vain? ſhall I leave you all as I found you?

you? God forbid. Methinks I hear ſome poor ſouls crying out by this time, O that I had but ſuch a Friend that would bring me acquainted with God! O that I had but a ſaving knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt! O that I did but underſtand what it means to have Communion with the Father and the Son, through the Spirit! I ſee my ſelf undone and loſt for ever, except I have an intereſt in this Friend. O who will bring me to him? How ſhall I get acquainted with him? O that is a ſweet Language! That's a very good queſtion, *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* but do you ſpeak in ſober ſadneſs? do you ſpeak in jeſt or in earneſt? If any one would give you advice and direction, would you follow it in ſpite of all the oppoſition of Hell: What do you ſay, will you labour to keep exactly to thoſe Directions that ſhall be given? if you will, I do not queſtion but that you and God will be acquainted before you die. But, O let not me take a great deal of pains and all to little purpoſe, as to you; do not now ſerve me as the *Jews* did *Jeremiah*, come and ask Counſel of God, and take the Devils. But in hopes that ſome poor ſouls may in good earneſt deſire Directions with an intent to follow them, I ſhall give them as follows.

I. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, labour to get a through ſenſe of your great eſtrangement from him, and of the danger of ſuch an eſtrangement. This is that which makes people ſo well contented with their condition, becauſe they ſee no great evil nor danger in it. Men are ready to think

think very vvell of their condition, although they be enemies to God, and no Friends to Christ. Enemies to God! They scorn your words, though all this while they express the greatest contempt of him conceivable; though they regard neither his Commands, Threatnings, nor Promises, though they value the company of a drunkard, a whore, before the company of God; though they do all that they can against God, Love nothing but he loves; though they side with Gods greatest enemies, yet they abhor to be thought to be any others then well-wishers to Christ, and the Friends and Servants of God; though they never come near God, yet they take it very ill if they be not reckoned amongst his acquaintance, and special Friends. Where is the professor almost living, that doth not count it a high piece of uncharitableness, if one do not Canonize them among the Saints, though they live more like bruites! How hainously do they take it, if any one do but question their state? They ignorant of *God*! They enemies to the Cross of Christ! they blind! they unconverted! Who is that man which dare question their condition? They hope to fare as well as any precise Puritan of them all, they will hope to be saved; say vvhat you vvill then, you shall never beat them out of their trust in *God*. And though in Faithfulness to their Souls, vve beg of them to make a more diligent inquiry into the state of their Souls, because vve knovv that the heart is so deceitful, and vve have very great cause to suspect that they knovv not *God*; yet they vvill go on very cheerfully vvith this confidence, untill Christ himself shevv them their mistake, and tell them plainly that he knovvs

knows them not, and that he never accounts them any of his Friends. But now did men but throughly understand their natural estrangement from God, were they but indeed sensible of the vileness of their hearts, did they but take notice of the Rebellions and Treasons that are within, the case would be far otherwise with them than it is. O this, this is the reason why so many millions of professors miscarry everlastingly, and never come to desire the Friendship of God, because they never believed that they were any otherwise than Friends, they do not suspect themselves at all, but think that they are rich and encreased in goods, and have need of nothing, whereas the Lord knows, and Christians know too, that they are poor, and blind, and naked. But now, when men begin to be thoroughly sensible of this enmity that is in their natures against God; When they see what mutinies and rebellions there are in them against their most gracious Lord and King; and when they are made to understand the consequences of this War, then how sensibly do they cry out, what shall they do? was there ever any poor wretched creatures in worse condition than themselves? Was ever any ones heart worse than theirs? Are there any out of hell that are such Monsters of sin as they are? O what shall they do? They see the Fire kindled, and themselves hanging over everlasting burnings: now all the World for a Christ; they believe now that God and Man are not equals; that there is no contending with the Almighty: Who can stand before his indignation? and when they see Gods Sword drawn, and the point of it set against their heart, when they behold the terrours of the

Lord

setting themselves in array against them? and themselves like to lose all, then how welcome would the news of a Parly be? How glad would they be then to hear of a Pardon? Then down go their weapons; they will sooner come before God with a Halter about their Necks, than a sword by their sides; they will fight how with no other Weapons but Tears and Prayers: As for their Armour, they break it in pieces, and lay it at the feet of their offended Prince; and O if they might but have any hopes of pardon, it would revive their hearts; if they might have but a look of kindness from God, it would be a greater comfort to them than all the whole World besides could afford them. To whom can a skilful Physician be more welcome, than to the sick? Christ came to seek the lost, and such as these we are sent to encourage: But till the soul comes to this pass, a Christ is not valued at all by it: If sinners be not made thus to understand themselves, why though we should plead with never so much earnestness with them, we do but beat the Air; all that we can say signifies very little. The man thinks his great work is done, though his hands have been all this while in his bosome; he is far towards in his Journey to Heaven, though he never set one step out of his own doors; he hath an interest in God, and is very well acquainted with him, and hath an assured confidence of his condition, that he shall be happy, though he have not one dram of grace. He is a good Churchman, he hath sat at the Lords Table, and the like: But O how many are there which shall see, and know that it is more than possible, to come before God, and to complement him much,

and to sit oft at his Table, and yet not to be any of his peculiar Friends, and special Acquaintance; now if ever you would make any thing of Religion, and be made highly to prize Gods favour, and to be really acquainted with him; you must labour to understand your distance from him, and the unconceivable hazzard that you run, while you are in a state of Separation from God; that there is but one step between you, and the state of the Damned; for what would become of you, if God should say to you, this night thy Soul shall be required of you. How easily can God in a Moment stop your breath, and send your Soul and Body into that lake that burns for ever and ever? and is it not then time for you to look about you? O this ignorance of our selves, how doth it expose us? (*Ar. Epict. l.* 1. c. 26) He was not a whit mistaken, who said, *That the not knowing of our selves, was one of the chiefest causes of our sin and misery, and that the consideration of the state of the Soul, and the through understanding it's depravedness, was the beginning of Wisdom; for it's weakness being well known, a man will not afterwards trust it in the determination of the greatest things; but man will be desirous to consult that great Oracle, the will of his Maker; and finding his old guide is blind, and hath oft missed him, thereupon he is the readier to be acquainted with such a one, who may direct him in the way to true happiness.* If you would therefore be acquainted with God, you must get well acquainted with your selves: you will upon the knowledge of your self be afraid of your self. He was none of the weakest men who said, *That a true sense of folly is no small sign of some proficiency in Wisdom.* Look into thy self, O man, search every

corner, behold what abundance of Armour there is in such and such a dark Cellar; but is this Armour strong enough to encounter a God withall? Can'st thou with these Fig-leaves defend thy self against the arrowes of the Almighty? Behold what a condition thou art in, if thou stirrest a step further. Yield speedily, and throw down thine Arms, or you are a dead man. Do you know this? Do you really believe this? Is it possible? What, believe that your Treason is found out, and that you are within a little of Execution, and yet not tremble, and yet not seek nor desire a pardon. When a man throughly understands how things stand between him and God, and how unable he is to carry on a War against him, he will speedily cast about, how he may conclude a Peace upon any terms. As soon as *Benhadad* knew what a condition his Army was in, when he saw the Crowns of his thirty Kings shaken, and his warlike Captains cut in pieces, or to tremble, and be like women, when instead of a mighty Army of gallant Warriors in martial order, behaving themselves bravely in the field, he saw their Carcases upon heaps, their garments rolled in blood, the Shields of his mighty Ones cast away, and himself wofully deserted, how speedily doth he send away his Servants, with ropes about their Necks, to beg Peace upon any terms? When the *Gibeonites* heard what dangerous fighting it was against *Joshuah*, they were not long before they made means to make a Covenant with him. So the Soul, when it doth seriously consider what a sad condition it is in, while it continues in Rebellion against God; it's impossibility to stand it out long, and utter inability to conquer him: When it perceives the de-

ſigns of Satan, vvho firſt cauſed this difference betvveen the Soul and God, and hath ſtill inſtigated and ſtirred it up to perſecute vvith all the violence that might be; I ſay, vvhen the Soul ſees this before it is quite too late! O hovv doth it bevvail it's condition, hovv doth it cry out, O vvretched man that I am, vvho ſhall deliver me! O vvhat vvill become of me, if I make War ſtill againſt God? And as for flying, vvhether ſhall I fly from his preſence, and vvhere ſhall I Hide my ſelf out of his ſight? And hovv ſhall I look him in the face, vvhom I have thus deſperately and ungratefully oppoſed? Can ſuch a Traytor as I poſſibly expect any mercy; if the Lord ſhould look upon me, and not immediately caſt me into Hell, it vvould be a miracle of Patience. And thus the man that begins a little to underſtand himſelf, ſpeaks to himſelf; and after that, he vvith *Ephraim*, ſmites upon his thigh, and bemoans his condition exceedingly! O that he ſhould ever take up Arms againſt his gracious Prince! O vvhat ſhall become of him? Well, I have heard that the God of Heaven is a merciful King, I vvill go and caſt my ſelf at his feet, if I periſh, I periſh. If I continue in this rebellion, there is no hopes; If I fly there is no eſcaping; and if I yield, I can but periſh! O ſad, ſad is my condition, Woe and alas, vvhat ſhall I do in theſe dreadful perplexities: But, vvhy do I ſtay here? The Avenger of blood followves after me apace; vvell, I vvill go to my God, through Chriſt, and I have heard that this is the onely vvay, and that there is not the leaſt hope in the World, any other vvay to get a pardon, to eſcape the Wrath to come. O that the precious and merciful Jeſus vvould pitty me,

and

and ſtand my Friend novv if ever! O that he vvould ſpeak a good vvord for me. *Have mercy upon me, Jeſus thou Son of* David *have mercy upon me!* O make peace for me, by thy blood; if thou vvilt, thou canſt do more vvith a vvord ſpeaking, than all the Saints and Angels in the World; if ever any poor Creature in the vvorld had need of mercy, then have I. O mercy, mercy, mercy for thy bloods ſake! But becauſe I ſhall ſpeak to this under another Direction, I ſhall be the briefer. Novv vvhen a man is at this paſs, he is in a fair vvay for peace; but novv as long as a man is ignorant of all this, he is quite in another Note, he vvill never buckle, and therefore he ſhall be broken. Therefore conſider vvell your condition, obſerve the actings of your ovvn Soul; if you be one of the Friends and Acquaintance of *God*, vvhat means your breaking and hating of his Spiritual Lavvs? What's the reaſon, if you love *God*, that you can take no delight at all in his company, no pleaſure in his Sabbaths? If you are a Friend of *God*, hovv hap you come no oftner to his houſe, vvhen he dvvells ſo near you? VVhy do you knock no oftner at his door? VVhy are you ſo rare in your viſits? Is this your kindneſs? Is this like a Friend? Hovv comes it to paſs that there are ſo many Arms found hid in your houſe? VVhat are they all for? VVhat is the meaning of all thoſe Meetings that you give to *Gods* Enemies? VVhat do all thoſe VVhiſperings, plots, and projects ſignifie? Is this friendſhip? Can you mean any good by all this? VVhat do you ſay of your condition? Do you ever complain, and that feelingly of your enmity againſt *God*? Did you ever obſerve vvhat a deſperate vvicked ſpirit you

have against your Maker; and were you ever made sensible of the danger of such a state, and ashamed and grieved to the very soul that you should ever engage against so good a God? Why then I am confident you can't but cry out with all the strength and earnestness of your soul for a peace, you can't but desire to meet with your adversary quickly, while he is in the way. But if you see nothing at all of the Treachery and Baseness that is in your heart, search, and search again, it's your Ignorance, and Blindness, and not the goodness of your state, that makes you to know nothing by your self. What, are you better than *David*? He was so jealous of his own heart, that he dared not to trust to his own Examination of it, but he desires the great Heart-searcher to help him in this work. Are you more excellent than *Paul* after his Conversion? Had he more reason to complain of himself than you have? O be at leisure to look within, and get *David's* Candle and Lanthorn to go into those dark corners of your soul with it, and it may be you may see that within which may make your heart to ake, and your joynts to quiver, and your spirits to faint within you. *Paul* was sometime as confident as you: he took no notice of the Enmity that was within against God, though he was as full of it as an Asp is of Poyson; yet before he came acquainted with God, the case was altered with him, he was of another mind when that light shined about him, and he cried out, *Lord what wilt thou have me to do?* He now thinks it is *hard kicking against the Pricks*, dangerous opposing of God, and persecuting of Christ in any of his Members; and he desires nothing in the

world

World so much as to be reconciled to God, and to have him for his Friend, whom before he fought against as an Enemy.

II. DIRECTION.

My next *Direction* to those which would be acquainted with God, shall be this: Get an humble heart, which is the consequent of the former. God will exalt none to this high honour of being his Friends, but such as have Low Thoughts of themselves. The humble are the persons that he will raise, these are they that he will converse most with, these are the great Favourites of Heaven which God doth delight to honour, *Psal.* 34. 18. *The Lord is nigh to them which are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.* God is nigh to them, (with Reverence be it spoken) God takes so much complacency in the company of such, that he can't endure to have them far from him, he must have them alwayes nigh to him, alwayes under his eyes; as for these broken ones, he will to be sure not leave them long, not go far from them, but will be ready at hand to set their bones, to bind up their wounds, to keep them from festering. It may be he may put them to much pain before he brings the Cure to perfection, but it is to prevent future Aches. He is a foolish cruel Chirurgeon, who for fear of putting his Patient to some pain, never searcheth the wound, but skins it over presently: and a wise man will not think him unmerciful that puts him to exquisite pain, so he make a through Cure of it. Thus God doth by his Patients sometimes, when the nature of their Distemper calls for it.

But however, he will be ſure not to be out of the way vvhen they vvant him moſt. It's poſſible they may look upon themſelves as forgotten by God, they may not know their Phyſitian vvhen he is by them, and they may take their Friend for an Enemy, they may think God far off when he is near; but vvhen their eyes are opened, and their diſtemper is pretty vvell vvorn off, they vvill vvith ſhame and thankfulneſs acknovvledge their Error; nay, they do from their ſouls confeſs that they do not deſerve the leaſt look of Kindneſs from God, but to be counted ſtrangers and enemies; but God vvill let them knovv that he loves to act like himſelf; that is, like a God of Love, Mercy, and Goodneſs; and that they are the perſons that he hath ſet his heart upon; he vvill have them in his Boſome, never leave them nor forſake them; and though theſe contrite ones many times look upon themſelves as loſt, yet God vvill ſave them, and they ſhall ſing a Song of thankfulneſs amongſt his delivered ones. Again, the Sacrifices of God are a broken heart: *A broken and a contrite Spirit, O God, thou wilt not deſpiſe, Pſal.* 51. 17. The proud ſinner he may bring his ſtalled Oxen, multitudes of Rams and Sheep, and his Rivers of Oyl, and yet all this vvhile not be accepted. There is another kind of Sacrifice that vvould be ten thouſand times more acceptable to God. We read that Sacrifices have been deſpiſed, Prayers, long Prayers have been rejected; Sabbaths, Nevv-Moons, and Solemn Aſſemblies the Lord hath ſometimes abhorred; but vve never read that he deſpiſed the Sacrifice of an humble heart, the Prayers of ſuch alvvays have an anſvver one vvay or other; their poor perfor-

mances,

nances, their Chatterings, and Mournings, are ſweet melody, and powerful Rhetorick in Gods ear. Who are the men that have moſt of Gods company? Who are they which he doth moſt frequently viſit? Are they not ſuch as look upon themſelves as the chiefeſt of ſinners? Theſe are they which are wrapped up into the third Heaven. None have ſo much of Heaven upon Earth as thoſe that wonder that the Earth doth not ſwallow them up, and that they are not in Hell. But, O ſaith the humble Soul, God is the high and mighty God, and infinite in his Holineſs and Juſtice; how then can ſuch a Creature as I ever expect that he ſhould ſo much as caſt his eye upon me? Yes, ſweet ſoul, ſuch is the infinite condeſcenſion and goodneſs of God, that he will ſooner look upon thee than another. And if you can't credit my words, hear what he ſpeaks himſelf, *Iſa.* 7. 15. *Thus ſaith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth Eternity, whoſe name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him alſo that is of a contrite and humble ſpirit, to revive the ſpirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of my contrite ones.* The thoughts of Gods Majeſty, Eternity, and Holineſs may, and with good reaſon too, awe that Soul that hath low thoughts of it ſelf. Every ſinner hath cauſe enough to cry out with aſtoniſhment, Will God look upon ſuch a vile ſinful wretch as I am? Will he that is infinite in holineſs take any notice of me, except, to ſhew his diſpleaſure againſt me? What ſhall I do? ſure ſuch a creature as I can't without a Miracle have a ſmile from God. *God* may indeed look upon me in his Wrath, and vex me in his ſore Diſpleaſure. *God* may juſtly look me into Hell; but that he

ſhould

ſhould look upon me in kindneſs, or take any ſpecial notice of me in love, that vvould be a Wonder indeed. What, God dvvell vvith me? Yes, vvith thee, if thou haſt but high thoughts of him, and lovv thoughts of thy ſelf; the meaner thou thinkeſt of thy ſelf, the greater vvorth he ſees in thee. God vvill not only look upon thee, nor vvill he only Knock at thy door, and call at your houſe, or give you a tranſitory viſit, but he vvill come and dvvell vvith thee. Novv dvvelling ſpeaks a continued abode vvith one, and thus God vvill continue vvith the Humble; never remove from them, for any conſiderable time, till eternity hath an end, till himſelf, and the ſoul ceaſe to be, vvhich vvill be never. God vvill not be a ſtranger to humble Souls, but he vvill come to them, and bring that along vvith him that ſhall make him, and them vvelcome too. God never comes to his Friends, but he brings good cheer along vvith him. When the Soul gives God the beſt entertainment, it is all at his coſt, his bread, his fatlings, his vvine, his oyl, his cordials, his rich dainties. Where God comes, he vvill keep a noble houſe, and there ſhall be mirth and rich cheer good ſtore. *Iſa.* 66. 1, 2. *Thus ſaith the Lord, Heaven is my throne, and Earth is my foot-ſtool: Where is that houſe ye will build me? And where is the place of my reſt? For all theſe things hath my hand made, and all theſe things hath been, ſaith the Lord; but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite ſpirit, and trembleth at my word.* God ſeems to have lovv thoughts of Heaven it ſelf in compariſon of an humble ſoul: This is the Pallace, vvhere this great King vvill keep his Court, this is the place of his reſt. God is not ſo much de-

lighted

lighted and pleased in any of his brave Seats, as in this of an Humble Heart; here he dwelleth most commonly; this was the great purchase of his own Son; this was the Master piece of his Power and Goodness; this was the Project of infinite Wisdom and counsel. *What shall I do to be saved?* Is a Language that makes Hell in a rage, and Heaven to rejoyce. God is never so well pleased as when he beholds the beauty of his own Grace shining in a poor lost self-debasing Creature. The Spouse is adorned with Humility, when Christ gives her that visit, *Cant.* 1. 4. God hath far more kindness for one that lies under a sense of his own Vileness, that thinks himself unworthy to tread upon Gods Earth, or to breath in his Air, than for the most confident righteous Pharisee in the World. Such an humble Soul will be much in admiring of God, and will set a high price upon his kindness; a look, a smile, a visit! O how welcome are they to those poor trembling Ones! Wherefore God doth with frequency and love visit them; he knows that he can never be unwelcome to such, they will count it the highest honour, that the most high should come into them in their low Condition. Wherefore if you desire to have any intimate acquaintance with God, labour to be more and more sensible of your own unworthiness, study your heart and nature well, and be more curious in the observance of the baseness and teachery of your own Soul; endeavour to have as mean thoughts of your self as *Paul* had, who did not stick to call himself the chiefest of sinners. Humble your selves before the Lord, and he will exalt you; he that is little in his own eye, is great in

Gods.

God. When was it that *Jacob* met with God, but when he had been humbling of himself? As you may read at your leisure, *Gen.* 23. There is many a professor that holds out many a year in a course of external performances, and yet never knows what it is to have any intimate acquaintance or converse with God: whereas I am perswaded, if the business were throughly examined, it would be found that they were never made deeply sensible of their undone state out of Christ, never understood the desperate depravedness of their hearts, and nature; that they never lay under any lively sense of their separation from, and enmity against God, and they were never brought off from their own righteousness, and saw themselves poor, beggarly, starved Creatures; and in this condition came to buy Wine and Milk without money, and without price. But this humility, it is an excellent Grace, it makes the soul fit for the richest enjoyments of God, and to do God the greatest service. Were it possible that God should converse much with a proud man, he would make a strange use of it, he would steal God's Crown, and put it upon his own head; but God would not endure proud Angels near him, and can it be expected that he should take proud men in their places? The more any one grows in Grace, and acquaintance with God, the more he sees of his own unworthiness, the more he admires Free Grace. Why, me Lord! why me! will be the Language of those which converse with God: And while they are thus admiring God, and laying themselves low, he comes again with his soul-ravishing kindnesses; and thus by humility they are more acquainted with God,

and

and being more acquainted with God, they are made more humble, and the one increaſeth the other. Thus the humble ſoul is raiſed higher and higher, till he come to an eternal poſſeſſion of God in the higheſt Heavens. When an humble Saint lives as it were in Heaven upon Earth, he ſcarce thinks himſelf worthy to live upon the Earth. When any one ſpeaks well of him, and admireth the grace of God in him, he looks upon himſelf as an unprofitable Servant, and he durſt not aſſume the leaſt glory to himſelf; not unto me, not unto me, but unto the Lord be the praiſe given. Who am I poor wretch? O did you but know what a heart I have, did you but ſee the workings of my thoughts, could you but tell how things are, indeed you would rather admire at Gods patience, then mans excellency. This he ſpeaks, not that he is worſe than others, but becauſe he hath a more ſpiritual ſence of his ſtate than others have: Neither doth he ſpeak thus in proud Policy, thinking to make others to have a better eſteem of him for his humility, but he doth really feel the preſſure of that filthineſs of ſin, which makes him thus to groan out theſe complaints. The reaſon why God doth converſe moſt with the humble, is becauſe they will be moſt thankful, and moſt fruitful, and make the Wiſeſt improvement of his favours. Wherefore, if you value the comfort of a ſpiritual life, if you deſire communion with God, if you would have a Heaven upon Earth, endeavour to get an humble heart: To walk humbly, and to walk with God, go together.

III. DI-

III. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, you must visit him often, be much at his house, Knock at his door many times in a day, and resolve to continue Knocking till he open; and if he do not come presently, Wait for him; you would do as much for your Prince, and it may be to a meaner person. We can't expect to be acquainted with them that we will not come near. It is to no purpose for that man to speak of acquaintance with God, who never speaks to him, comes at him, or enquires after him. Neither will a slight visit or two in a Transitory complemental manner serve the turn; a man may do this, and yet not be said to be acquainted with God. A stranger may come once to your house that was never there before, and never intends to come again; and I believe you will scarce write such a one down amongst your special Friends and intimate acquaintance. So in Spirituals; for acquaintance and converse with God are no such slight things as the World commonly takes them to be. If you would make any thing of this great work of Getting acquaintance with God, you must not jest in it, you must give God many solemn and set visits, and carry your self with all the observance and respect to him that you can for your soul. This is that which keeps many thousands of strangers from the life of Grace and intimate acquaintance with God, because they know not what those more peculiar visits of God mean; they understand not what it is to draw nigh to God in secret; they come not to him with those more spiritual Acts of Religion; they

pray

pray, it may be, in their Families, and it may be that but ſeldom (but by the way, never let ſuch pretend to the Knowledge of God, who call not upon him in their Families) but what they do, it is but in a poor formal perfunctory manner between ſleep and awake; and will you call this acquaintance with God? Will you call this an act of Adoration and ſpiritual Worſhip? Is it to bow down a while before God, and to read or ſpeak a few words, and there's an end? Their work is over, their task is done, and they are glad of it. But now, ſuch as theſe do not come into Gods Chambers; they come to his Houſe, as I may ſo ſay, but they regard not vvhether he be at home, vvhether they ſpeak to God, and have an anſvver from God or no: They call indeed, but deſire not much to be heard; they Knock, but are not very careful to ſtay till the door be opened. But alas, alas, ſuch as theſe can't tell vvhat it is to enjoy communion vvith God. They have got, it may be, into ſome courſe of external performances, by reaſon of the Example of their Superiours, Education, or by being under the ſound of the Goſpel, and from ſome force that natural conſcience doth put upon them, vvhich vvill not be content except ſomething be done. But ſuch as theſe may not be ſaid to viſit God in that manner that I vvould perſvvade them to, vvhich vvould be acquainted vvith God; for all this they ſtand a great vvay off from God, and may be termed ſtrangers and forreigners. Hovv ſeldom are they upon their knees in ſecret? Hovv rare a thing is it for them vvith *Iſaac*, to go into the field to meditate? They viſit their Farms, they viſit their Flocks, they viſit their Svvine, they go often to

viſit

visit their sottish drunken Companions, whilest God and Christ, their Bible, their Closet, their Hearts are forgotten, and seldom or never visited. And is this true kindness to ones self? Is it any Wisdom to slight such a Friend as God would be to us, and to make so much of such sorry Companions? O stupid and dull souls! O what do we mean so strangely to forget our selves! For who is like to get by it, God or we, when we come and feed at his Table, and spend upon his cost? O little do people think what they might enjoy, would they purposely set themselves to meet with God, and go to his house with a strong resolution, not to come away from him till they have seen him, or heard from him. Now the great duties in which the soul may be said to visit God in, and in which God doth many times give out much of himself to the soul, are these:

1. Solemn Meditation.
2. Secret Prayer.
3. Fasting.
4. Community of Experiences, and Communion with the Saints.
5. The Lords Supper.

1. *Meditation*, When the Soul doth fix it self upon the Thoughts of some Spiritual and Divine object, such as the love of God in Christ, the glory of another world, *&c.* This is, as it were, going out to meet the Lord, and to take a walk with our Beloved; this is the getting up to Mount *Pisgah*, to take a survey of that goodly Land. When the soul doth as it were, bath it self in the Contemplation of Christs beauty, and labours to enamour it self more and more with his love; and to throw it self, as I may so say, into that

that Ocean of Divine goodneſs; it will ſcarce leave till it be wound up to the higheſt pitch of admiration, of that infinite boundleſs love which ſhould do ſuch glorious things for ſo vile and contemptible, for ſo rebellious and unthankful a wretch as that is. O vvhat manner of love is this! O that I vvere ſick of love! O that I might die ſick of love! O that I vvere once in the embraces of my deareſt Lord and Husband! O that I could do nothing elſe day and night, but praiſe, love, and admire this infinite boundleſs love? And did Chriſt indeed offer up his life for my ſin? Did he not think his precious heart-blood too dear for me? And ſhall I think my heart-love too dear for him? What, for me, Lord, vvhich am the chiefeſt of ſinners! Here, here's kindneſs vvith a vvitneſs. Stand ſtill, O my ſoul, and admire, ſtand looking upon this lovely ſight till thou art all on fire. Theſe are pure flames, here thou needeſt not to fear to exceed; vvider thy ſoul, let thy affections run vvithout controle. More fire, ſtill, blovv hard, it doth yet but ſmoke: O for ſome coals from the altar! O for more fire, more fuel! O that my heart vvere vehemently inflamed in the ſtrongeſt love to him, vvho ſtill deſerves a thouſand times more! Help me all ye Angels, to bleſs and adore his marvellous loving kindneſs. Chriſt is a Friend to Publicans and Sinners; indeed, or ſuch a one as I had never been on this ſide of Hell. O love, love, love! What ſhall I render unto the Lord? O that men vvould bleſs the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his vvonderful vvorks to the children of men! O vvhat meaneſt thou, O my ſoul, that thou art yet ſo cold? Avvake, avvake Pſaltery and Harp, I my ſelf vvill

awake and praiſe, admire and love thee, O my God, whoſe love to my Soul is beyond expreſſion. And thus while the Soul is muſing, the Fire begins to burn; while the Spouſe is thinking of her glorious Husband, he knocks at the door, ſhe draws the Latch, and he comes in ſmelling of Mirrhe, Aloes, and Caſſia; he comes and kiſſes the Soul with the kiſſes of his lips, his love is better than wine; he comes and takes the Soul into his arms. O the ſweet pleaſure of Divine Love, infinitely tranſcending all carnal Affections! O the joy that is at this meeting, far ſurpaſſing humane apprehenſion! O the ſweet entertainment that God and the Soul gives each other at ſuch a time! I appeal to the experience of thoſe that have been much exerciſed in this great Duty of *Meditation*, if they have been in good earneſt in the work, I am confident they can ſay ſomething to this point. What ſayeſt thou, O Chriſtian, which art uſed to imitate *Iſaac*? Didſt thou never meet with anothergeſs Companion than *Rebeccah*? As he met mith a Wife, ſo thou haſt met with thy Husband? When thou haſt been in the Field, or Cloſet, at this work, hath not Chriſt then taken you by the hand, and led you into his Garden, and made you to taſte of his pleaſant Fruits? Hath he not brought you into his Banquetting-houſe, and brought out ſome of his choiceſt dainties? Are not thoſe Flaggons more full of Spirit, more Cordial, and refreſhing than Wine? O little do any but thoſe who have tried it, think what a life they might lead, if they would with ſerioufneſs engage in this duty! Speak O ye gracious ones, that make conſcience of this Soul-raviſhing duty; ſpeak I beſeech you, and

do

do not ſmother the kindneſſes of God to you; ſpeak, and let him have the praiſe: It may be by your venturing your Experience, hundreds may be encouraged to ſet upon the ſame work, and hundreds may alſo have the ſame experiences. What do you ſay? Have you not found the benefit of this duty? Did you never find Meditation a ſweet Work? Was it worth your while or no to ſequeſter your ſelves a while from the World to talk with your Beloved? Did you ever repent you of your Labour, and think your time loſt? And have you not been able to ſay, that at ſuch and ſuch a time, when you were in the Mount, that it was good being there? Could you not have been almoſt content to have left the deareſt Relations, and to have quitted your Intereſt in all Creature-comforts, ſo you might have had fuller enjoyments of God? Could you not have been contented to paſs from Contemplation to Viſion and fruition? Why, ſpeak then for the Lords ſake, and for the ſake of precious Souls, and keep not ſuch a thing as this is in; let your unexperienced Neighbours know what a Soul-raviſhing, and Soul-raiſing Duty Meditation is. Let me ask thee which readeſt theſe Lines, did you ever try what there was in this Duty of Meditation? I Suppoſe, if you converſe much with ſuch Books as ſpeak of Communion with God, you can't but deſire ſomething of it, and I am perſwaded you have ſometimes wept ſince you began to read this Book, to think how little you Experience; I believe you would be glad with all your Soul, to know what it is to be acquainted with God, and to have ſuch a Friend as I have been ſpeaking of. Why let me ask you again, did you ever try

what *Meditation* is? (You may read much of the excellency of this Duty, and directions about it in Mr. *Baxters Saints Everlasting Rest*) did you ever get out of the world, and intensely fix your heart and thoughts upon any of the glorious Attributes of God? Did you ever set before your eyes his love in Christ? If not, O try and fall to this work seriously and speedily, and you shall soon find the sweetness of it; you will soon say that you lost many a good meeting, many a dainty bit for want of going for it. A carnal worldly heart I must confess may possibly spoil this Duty as all others, and grow formal in it, and be weary of it, and cast it off (though, let me put in this, I believe its marvellous rare for a Hypocrite to have any thing to do in such a secret duty as this is) but if they were true to the interest of their own Souls in the management of this work, I am confident they would be every day more and more in love with this duty: For I am perswaded that when the Soul is in good earnest, pay, I can speak it positively, there is no duty doth so much raise and warm the Soul; there is no duty wherein the poeple of God enjoy his sweet company more than in this. This opens the treasure of Gods kindness; this takes his Love-tokens and presents them to the view of the Soul: this unlocks the Cabinets, and fetches out those precious Jewels; by this the Soul doth, as it were talk with its Beloved; and in this Christ doth as it were, take the Soul by the hand, and lead it into his Palace, and shews it all those glorious things, which it shall shortly have in her possession for ever. And how can this choose but engage the Soul to express its gratitude to the heigh

bright in answer to such love; and when the soul is in this frame, Christ will not be behind-hand with her. No love shall be lost between them: If the Spouse walk out to look for her Beloved, she shall find him before she hath done.

2. Another duty by which the Soul doth Visit God in a special manner, is *Secret Prayer*; by this the Soul knocks, and God is quick of hearing, and none of his Friends shall wait without doors so long as to Catch cold. By this the Soul doth as it were storm Heaven, by this it gets into the Presence Chamber, and presents its requests. By this duty a Christian doth as it were return the Key of Heavens Doors, and by this he unlocks the door of his own Soul; and so there is free access on both sides, the Soul Visits God, and God visits the Soul, and this creates an intimacy. The poor wounded Creature opens his wounds, and then the great Physician comes with the Balm of *Gilead*. When *Jacob* is thus weeping and praying alone, he meets with *God*, he meets a blessing, he wrestles, he conquers. This duty of *Secret Prayer*, and that other of *Meditation*, are two fatning dishes, by which the Souls of Believers come to Gods Table, and eat, and drink of strengthening food; and for want of these, many poor souls are lean. O why do Christians, why do Professors maintain no fairer Correspondency with *God* in those duties wherein he doth manifest himself more than ordinarily to the Soul? The reason of it may be because *God* accounts himself more highly honoured, and more truly loved by them which are much in these, than by others. By this man doth as it were honour the goodness of God, in that it shews it worth the while to steal

out of the world, and to leave the beſt Company on Earth to go to God: He honours the Truth of God, by being earneſt for what God hath promiſed though it be unſeen; he honours the Omniſciency of God, by contenting himſelf with his Eye and his Ear alone; he ſanctifies his Omnipreſence, by believing that his God can hear him, and be with him in what corner ſoever he creeps into. I might be large in ſpeaking of the excellencies of this duty, but I refer it rather to another place. But I would not be miſtaken in what I have delivered, as if I would by this exclude Family-Prayer, no, far be it from me; for God in theſe doth many times exceedingly refreſh his. But becauſe a man can't poſſibly judg ſo well of himſelf by publick Prayer, as he can by ſecret: And hypocriſie and pride, do not uſually ſo much attend ſecret duty as more publick. Its poſſible in more publick duty, that a man may be much raiſed, and be very warm, and high in his expreſſions, and almoſt Raviſh the hearts of his Hearers, whereas he may be all that while acted only by a proud heart, and for ought I know, the Devil himſelf may help a man thus to pray ſometimes. This I am confident of, he is not afraid of ſuch prayers as theſe which tend ſo much to the heardening of a Sinner and makes him believe that his heart is vvarmed with Communion with God, when as it is poſſible it is nothing but a ſecret ſelf-pleaſing, that thoſe that joyned with him, might think very highly of him, as one that was paſſing Spiritual in his performances. O the heart of man is deep, and deſperately full of Deceit! But now, there is none of this Temptation in ſecret Cloſet prayer, and there a Soul may be more particular in its com-

plaints

ants and petitions, more earnest in pleading with God, and may use such Expostulations, Postures, and Gestures, such Intermissions, and Gaspings, such pauses as would be very unfit for more publick Duty. Wherefore I lay somewhat the more stress upon this Duty of *Secret Prayer*. But this I say again, where one of them is practised conscientiously, the other will not be neglected. I might add the Practise and Experience of Gods Children to inforce this Duty. *David* would never have been at it so oft at midnight, if he had got nothing at all by it. *Peter* would scarce have forgot to eat, when he was an hungry, except he had met with a bit in a Corner to stay his Stomach.

3. *Fasting*, especially private *Fasting*, is another Duty, wherein God meets the Soul, and the Soul visits God. This is as it were Execution-day, the day when the Soul brings out all the Enemies of God to be Crucified; this is the day wherein the Idols are searched for, brought out, and buried, or ground to Powder, and these are things which God will come to see with much delight. By this the Soul is as it were adorned, her Deformities done away, and she is trimmed up to meet her Beloved, When a Saint fasts from sin, and abstains from sensual Pleasures, then it is many times feasted by God, and refreshed with Spiritual enjoyments.

4. Another season wherein God meets the Soul, and the soul is visited by God is, when Christians are met together to communicate experiences, or to discourse together about the great things of God. What though most of the world are asham'd, to own Religion when it is out of fashion?

ſhion? What though but few dare meet together to ſpeak of Gods goodneſs, and to Praiſe him, and call upon his Name? Why, Chriſt ſays, Though there be but two or three of them, he will make the number one the more, *He will be in the midſt of them:* And though they dare but whiſper, it may be, and their meetings to obſerve God, and do good to one another, may be prohibited by the publick Magiſtrate; and conſequently what they do in this kind, muſt be done in a great deal of hazard, yet the People of God ſtand not long diſputing, they know what to do in this caſe; yet they would be wiſe in it too? Not to dare the Magiſtrate, and to do what they do to confront Authority, but in the uprightneſs of their Souls they deſire to meet together to Worſhip God according to his own Will. Yet for all this, though they manage their buſineſs with never ſo much ſecreſie, God will take notice of them, he hearkens and hears, and a Book of remembrance is written for them that call oft upon his Name, and God will make them up among his Jewels. But I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak of ſomething to this purpoſe afterwards, and therefore I paſs it over the more briefly.

Another time wherein the Lord is pleaſed to diſcover much intimacy, and indeared affection to his people, is in the Sacrament of the Lords Supper. This is the great Paſſover, and it can't be unwelcome News to the poor *Iſraelites*, to hear of Redemption from VVars, then Egyptian Bondage, inſtead of being burdened with barbarous Task-maſters, to be made free, Rich, and Honourable, and to ſee the ſtrength of the Enemy laid in the Duſt. It is not for nothing

that

that this Paſſover is to be had in everlaſting Remembrance. If I ſhould Appeal to the people of God that have kept this ſolemn Feaſt, and ask them how their hearts were affected, do they not then bow their Heads and Hearts, and adore that Goodneſs that ſhould Save, Feed, and Feaſt them, and Puniſh, Kill, and Damn others? Are there not thouſands that can tell you, that Chriſts Fleſh is Bread indeed, and his Blood Drink indeed? no Proviſion ſo great, no Banquet ſo Sweet, ſo Noble: No Entertainment comparable to that which the Princely Jeſus giveth to his Spouſe in that Ordinance: The King brings her into the Banqueting-Houſe, and his Banner over her is Love: ſhe is then made to underſtand, that the Kiſſes of His Lips do breath Life, and that His Viſits at ſuch a time, uſually leave behind them more ſpecial Teſtimonies of the largneſs of his Heart, the lovelineſs of his Nature, and of his matchleſs Excellency. Speak Chriſtian, what doſt thou ſay to this? Canſt thou not ſubſcribe to this? Art thou not able to ſay, that then thou haſt taſted and ſeen, couldſt thou not then go out and invite all the poor ſtarved hungry Souls in the World, to come and See, and Taſte? Art thou not able to ſay, come, and I will tell you what Chriſt hath done for my Soul? Let me ask that Saint that hath been Feaſted many time, and oft, what he thought of his Entertainment: Were you not made Welcome? Was not the joy of the Lord your ſtrength? Was not the Proviſion that the world entertains her Friends with, but mean, courſe, unſavory, compared with it? Which was beſt, the Huſk; or the Bread, and Fatted Calf, the Garlick and Onions, or the Manna,

Manna, the Milk and Honey? 'Tis not without cause that the Faces of some do shine, their looks speak their Face none of the meanest, and their Activity is not a disparagement to their Keeper; inquire further, and you shall be informed if their experience be not too big for to be cloathed in words. How oft have some of Christs Favourites, after they have Dined with their Lord, been led forth into the Garden to Walk; and Oh the delightful Shades that they have sat under! At another time, Christ, not Satan, hath carried them as it were in his Arms, and Bosome, and set them upon the Pinacle of the Temple, not to make them giddy, and hazard their Fall, but to let them understand how much he hath preferred them before others, and as long as they are upon that great Corner-Stone, no Storms can shake; in Christs Arms no fear of falling: At another time, the Soul hath been carried into the Mount of God, and there it hath seen Christ Transfigured, and beheld so much Brightness, Glory, and Majesty in him, that hath reflected a Glory, upon it self, and even Transfigured the Soul, that its scarce like it self, and there it could say, its good being here; and then, Christ hath bid the Soul lift up its Eyes and look up to the Heavens, look round from one side to the other, and look [illegible]d the visible Heavens by Faith, to the Seat of [illegible] blessed; Well, all this is thine, to thee will I give it, I purchased it, I have paid for it, and 'tis thine, and live like one that is worth more than a world; live up to your Estate, expect that shortly I should set you in the Possession of all: And as for the World, look down upon that, if it be worth the accepting, so much

much of it as is good for thee thou ſhalt have alſo. O did weak Chriſtians but know what Strength, joy, and Comfort this Ordinance doth afford, I believe they would not be ſo hardly perſwaded to come when they are invited! Did they but underſtand how ſweet, how wholeſome, how dainty the Diſhes are which Wiſdome prepares; could they but conceive what ſatisfaction and fulneſs there is for the empty; what joy, and Solace for the Mourning, and Diſconſolate; what ſtrength and quickning for the Weak, I am ready to think that they would ſcarce be ſo long abſent from the Lords Table: But think not that every one that ſits down is made ſo welcome, nor that Chriſt gives his Dainties to ſtrangers, or enemies; many may come and Receive, and not only Feed upon a piece of Bread, and Drink two or three Spoonfuls of Wine; and really, if this were all the Proviſion that a Saint vvere to have, it were ſcarce worth ſo ſolemn an Invitation: It's poſſible to come thither to eat and drink your own Damnation, and inſtead of an affectionate Treatment to be diſmiſſed with a Friend, how comeſt thou hither, not having on the Wedding Garment. Yet the ſenſible Hungry burthened Souls, notwithſtanding all their fears may come, nay they muſt, and its little leſs than giving Aſſent to Satans calumnies which he raiſeth againſt Chriſt and his wayes to forbear; its too ungratefull a Contempt of one of the excellent Cordials which the great Phyſitian hath provided for the recovering and ſtrengthning of his poor ſwooning Patients; and in a word, its too like a fooliſh being fond of our Sin and Sorrow, when we refuſe the comfortable

ſortable Appointment; which the Goodneſs and Wiſdome of a Father, the Love, and Tenderneſs of a Husband, and the Sweetneſs of the Holy Spirit, doth ſo freely offer, Perſwade, and Command: the Spirit, ſaith Come, and the Bridegroom ſaith Come, and why ſhould not he that that is a Thirſt come thankfully, humbly, ſpeedily. Well now, poor weary Soul, what haſt thou to ſay againſt the Excellency of Reſt? Poor ſick Soul, what Fault canſt thou find with Eaſe, Health, and Strength? Poor guilty Soul, that looks upon thy ſelf as next to Condemned; What harm would a Pardon, and the publick Sealing of it do thee? Who would think that man hungry, that had rather eat Aſhes than Bread? Who would judge that perſon thirſty, that had rather drink Gall, Tears, and Wormwood, than the clear refreſhing Streams, that come from that Rock, the Lord Chriſt? Will you never believe that Chriſt invites you, look into the Note that he hath ſent out his Servants with, whoſe Name do I Read there? Who are the perſons that are Invited? Of what Rank and Quality? Are they the Great Ones of the VVorld? Are they the Learned? Are they the Proud, and Self-Conceited Phariſees? Why, I find none of theſe in the Writing; Who are they then that may come with Confidence to draw water out of theſe Wells of Conſolation? The Poor in Spirit, the Hungry, the Sick, the Wounded, the Loſt; theſe are Pools of *Betheſda*, where the Angels of the Covenant do oft Deſcend, and Move the VVaters; and where is it fitter for the Impotent to lie, than there where they cannot miſs of a Doctor, a Viſit, or Cure, VVhat do you think of

this

this poor Heart; are they but flouriſhes, do I ſpeak, or doth Chriſt, and if he ſay it, who can diſſannul it? Will he, can he be worſe than his word; I knew he is uſually better, but never [illegible] of his Promiſe; will you Credit the Expe-riences of Chriſtians, have they not ſeen, have they not known, have they not felt; yea, have not all your Spiritual ſences been exerciſed, and refreſhed at that time when the King hath been at his Table? One is ready to ſay, if ever I could have left the World at a minutes warning, and have ſtept immediately into Eternity, it was then when mine eyes beheld the King in his beauty, when he held out his Golden Scepter unto me, and took me into his Imbraces. Yea, when the Miniſters of Chriſt preſented me with the Jewels and Bracelets, and ask't me whither I would go with them to Chriſt; my Soul made a ſpeedy and thankful reply, my Heart and Love is his, and his will I be for ever. O that I were once ſafe in his Armes! O that I might live with him, and never part! O when ſhall it be! *Come Lord Jeſus, come quickly.* I remember I have heard it reported of that Reverend, and Holy man of God Maſter *Allen* (who lived at as high a rate as moſt on this ſide Perfection and Glory) that he was before he died in very rare ſeraphique raptures of Joy and Love, ſo that he could not chuſe but burſt out into unuſual Expreſſions of Praiſe, ſuch as theſe: Ten thouſand praiſes to the King of Saints for the freeneſs, and riches of his Grace to any poor Soul; let every corner of Heaven ring with *Hallelujahs*; let all the Angels help me to praiſe thy incomparable, lovely, and glorious Jeſus, O the Joys that he feaſts my Soul with!

who

who would not be Christs Servant! Never did I feel such transcendent, pure Divine Joys, except at the Lords Table; and then indeed I have been oft so raised in Spirit, that my Nature, except sustained by a Miracle, could scarce bear a greater weight of Comfort. O the unspeakable vast satisfying Pleasures that Christ in that Ordinance doth afford some of his sometimes! I have heard another dear Brother say, that for some years together, he scarce ever failed of some notable Token of love at that great Ordinance. But I would not, instead, of comforting, and incouraging the poor Saint, bring him into greater fears and despondings: Judge not therefore that this is the portion of all Gods Children, nor of any at all times to have such large Discoveries as these. Heaven is reserved for Heaven; some have a single Messe, some a double, some five times more than their Brethren; let all be thankful if the great *Joseph*, instead of a Prison, give a Feast, and in it make himself known to us to be our brother; let's love him, admire his condescention, and be ready to wonder that he doth so much for us, rather than repine that he doth more for others. If thou hast some drawings, and longings, and mournings after Christ, and a deep sence of thy hardness, unbelief, and worldlyness, be thankful; it may be this is more wholsome entertainment, and fitter for the present Temper and Constitution of thy Soul, than those Flagons of Wine, perhaps they would fly up into thy head, and make thee giddy, proud, and wanton; if thou be but well wrought, poor, and hungry, thou wilt be thankful for a little; and a Crumb that falls from the Table to an humble

Soul,

Soul, is better entertainment than it knows it deſerves, or could without a Miracle of Kindneſs have expected; miſtake me not, as if I would have Chriſtians ſit down ſatisfied with little or no comfort at that Ordinance; no, 'tis quite another deſign that I am carrying on; 'tis only a hint to quell Ingratitude; my great work at preſent is, to quicken diligence in Preparation, and to raiſe the Saints Valuation of that Ordinance, and his Expectations from Chriſt in it. I ſay again, Chriſt uſually proportions his entertainment to the diligent, faithful, humble preparations of the Soul to meet him; they that trim their Lamps, and have Oyl in them, are moſt like to meet that Bridegroom with Joy; he that hath on the Wedding Garment, can't miſs of a Welcom; and the good, and faithful Servant is moſt likely to have the Maſters commendation, and to enter into his Joy. But more or leſs, every ſincere Soul at one time or another, will meet with Refreſhment at that Supper; and amongſt all the rare Diſhes that are ſerved up, no queſtion but ſome will be ſuitable (if not all) to a hungry, Spiritual Stomack. I can ſcarce leave this ſweet Subject, the time draws nigh, and the Servants are ſent out to invite, and thou, O my Soul, art one of the Gueſts that are bidden. Hark, methinks I hear a Royal Proclamation, *Whoſoever is a thirſt, let him come and drink of the Waters of Life freely*: Methinks the ſilver-Trumpet of the Goſpel, and Divine Love ſounds a Jubilee: Methinks the Air ecchoes with a ſtrange Harmony, ſomewhat like that, *Luke* 2. 14. *Glory to God in the higheſt, and on Earth Peace, Good-will towards men.* Don't the very Heavens ring with theſe Bleſſed Words, *A*

Saviour

Saviour! a Saviour! a mighty Redeemer! a Pardon! a Pardon? Liberty! Liberty! a glorious Liberty! And again the Congregations of the Saints, and redeemed ones cry, *Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah.* I had thought to have done, but the Feast is so sweet I must fall on again: Here's no Surfeiting, the more I feed, the more hungry; and yet the more satisfied, the more delighted: Here's nothing but Fulness, Sweetness, and Love may be written upon every Dish; the Royal noble everlasting Bounty, may be proclaimed before every Course: All the dismal Bonds are thrown in and Cancelled; all our Debts forgiven and paid, the great Surety shews, the Acquaintance long since granted in the Court of Heaven, now its given in to the Court of Conscience. The bloody War is concluded by a happy, and firm Peace: God is no longer a Judge, an Enemy, but now the Soul hears such words, Friend, Father, Husband. The Challenges of Law, Conscience, and Satan, are now silenced, the Inditements against the Soul are all quashed, the Soul may walk now at liberty, and fear no Arrest; who can lay any thing to the charge of Gods Elect? its Christ that justifies, who can condemn, Christ saith it, swears it, seals it, it cannot but be true, why art thou then cast down poor Soul, and why art thou disquieted? Christ hath made a blessed exchange with thee, he hath drank the bitter Cup, and offers thee the sweet which is spiced with Grace and Love; Christ hath purchased the Crown for thee, and taken the Cross to himself, he took the Rags, and gives thee the Robes, he became Poor, that thou mayst become Rich, he emptied him-

himself that thou mayest be filled; he was esteemed as nothing, that thou mightest from vvorse than nothing possess all things; and what now remains, but that with the greatest Gratitude, you accept of Christ's Offer, vvhensoever he invites thee to his Table? What doth better become thee, than the deepest Resentment of the highest kindness, and a grateful Closure vvith all the Overtures of Divine Goodness? O happy are the People that are admitted to this Intimacy! Happy are the Souls that know the Worth, the use of this Ordinance, and make it their business wisely to improve it. O what an Opportunity have such of Christ here! What Request may they not then have granted! And vvhen Christ is giving, what will he, vvhat can he deny them which have his heart already? I have been the more large in this, because it was the particular Request of one of my Brethren a Reverend Minister, that in the next Edition, I would not forget that Ordinance in which God usually doth most signally discover his Love to his People.

IIII. DIRECTION.

If you would get Acquaintance vvith God, get Christ along with you, vvhen you go to God. You are like to speed no way so soon as this Way; Nay, let me say, all that I have said before signifies nothing at all without this. There is no Name under Heaven, by which we can be saved, but by the Name of Christ; and whosoever comes to the Father by Him, He will in no wise cast out. God can't deny his own Son any thing.

he can never forget that great undertaking of his, by which he glorified his Fathers infinite Justice, and infinite Love, and did him more Honour than all the Saints and Angels in the World. His Son, the Lord Christ, hath such an interest in his Father, that he can as soon despise his own Honour, as to refuse any Request that is presented to him, by his Son. If Christ come unto him, and say, Father, here is a poor sinner that I have undertaken for, and that flew to me for Refuge, Look upon him for my sake; Why the Fathers Arms are presently open; he will not reject his Sons Petitions. The truth of it is, this is the greatest cause of the miscarriages of poor Creatures, that go about to do that themselves, and by themselves, which they can never do alone. They go to God all alone, and no wonder then they mett with a Frown; for there is no Name under Heaven, by which a man can be saved, but by the Name of Christ, and out of Christ: God is a Consuming Fire; and there is but one Mediator, the Man Christ Jesus. And there is but one Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. That which *Joseph* said of *Benjamin*, God saith of Christ, except you bring *Benjamin* along with you, you shall not see my Face; except you bring Christ along with you, you shall not see my Face. There is a notable Story which is commonly by Divines applied to our present purpose, and that not without good Reason; it is concerning a Law among the *Molossians*, where whosoever came to the King with his Son in his Arms, should be accepted into Favour, let his Fault be what it will. So let a Man be what he will before, yet if he come to God in Christ, he can't be thrust away.

O

O therefore, if thou wouldeſt have any countenance from God, beg for a Chriſt to bear thee Company into the Preſence of God. I will tell you this for your Comfort, Chriſt hath a loving deſign in his Heart to do ſuch Offices of Kindneſs for poor Malefactors that underſtand ſomething of their Danger. If you ſee your ſelf loſt for want of Reconciliation with God, Chriſt he ſtands ready to lead you into his Fathers Houſe. O did you but know how willing he is to bring undone loſt Penitents to God, it would make your heart leap within you for joy. Behold how oft he asks after you; what doth that Sinner mean to Ruine himſelf? I would with all my heart bring him out of all thoſe Perplexities, and undertake to make God and him Friends, if he would be but ruled by me; and upon this account he ſends up and down many Hundreds of his Miniſters to tell Sinners as much, that they may not be undone Everlaſtingly. Doth not Wiſdome call? Doth not Chriſt Plead the Caſe, and Expoſtulate with Sinners? And who would not, that hath any underſtanding at all of his State out of Chriſt, with all poſſible thankfulneſs be encouraged to accept of his Kindneſs? Chriſt hath done as much as this comes to already for many Millions, and his Father never ſaid to him, Son, why do you trouble your ſelf and me with ſo many of theſe wretched Creatures, let them alone to take their courſe. Where did God ever expreſs himſelf in this manner? Did he ever take it unkindly that his Son ſhould every day bring ſuch Gueſts to his Houſe, and be continually begging one Boon or other for them, or putting up ſome Petitions upon their Account, or pleading with his Father for

them when they do offend. Is God displeased at such work as this? Is he not as willing to receive such, as his Son is to bring them? and both Father and Son more willing to save the Sinner than he is to be Saved? O Kindness; Christ loves the Sinner better than he loves himself! And as I said before, so I say again, the Father doth not grutch any thing that Christ gives, or doth for poor sinners. The Righteousness of Christ, it is that vvedding Garment, in which we may sit at the Kings Table, and are welcome; these are the Robes of our Elder Brother, in which we can't miss of our Fathers Blessing. O how many poor Creatures have walked in the Dark many Years, because they have not been brought off from themselves, but have sought that by themselves, which is to be sought only by Christ; because they have looked for that in the Law, which is to be found only in the Gospel? and no wonder their business went on so slowly, when they went the quite contrary way to work. VVhen any comes to God without Christ, they come like *Simon Magus*, with their own Money in their hand to buy a great Commodity, which is not to be Purchased with such kind of Coyn. If you come to God through Christ, you may come with boldness to the Throne of Grace; but if you come without him, you do but come with Madness upon the Point of the Flaming Sword.

V. DI.

V. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, come much vvhere he is vvont to be, frequent his houſe, be always at the Doors of Wiſdom, engage much in his Ordinances. This vvas that courſe that *David* took vvhen he vvanted Gods company, away he goes to the houſe of God; and, O vvhat earneſtneſs doth he uſe vvhen the doors of the Lords Tabernacle vvere ſhut, to get them open again? What moan doth he make vvhen he vvas for ſome time ſequeſtred by his enemies, from the enjoyment of God in his publick Ordinances? *As the Hart pants after the water-brooks, ſo did his Soul pant after God, the living God.* O vvhen ſhould he appear before him? When ſhould he again behold the out goings of God in his Sanctuary, as ſometimes he had? *How amiable are thy Tabernacles,* ſaith he, *O Lord God of Hoſts! And one thing have I deſired, and that will I ſeek after, that I may dwell in thy houſe, and ſee thee, and enquire in thy Tabernacle, Pſal.* 42. *Pſal.* 48. *Pſal.* 27. 4. He thought God vvas like to be found no vvhere ſo ſoon as at his own houſe; he vvas ſure he vvas never from home. *David* can never forget vvhat uſage, and entertainment he vvas vvont to have there, and that this great Friend vvas uſed to have a ſtanding Table, an open Houſe. and that vvhen his Gueſts vvere ſet, he vvould come and bid them vvelcome; eat O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved. See therefore that you get into that part of Gods houſe vvhere he doth moſt frequently come, get under the muſt povverful Miniſtery; O hear the Word vvith all the Reverence, Attention,

and affection that you can for your Soul; miss no any opportunities that God puts into their hand, lest that should be the time in which you might have met with God; Lye at the pool of *Bethesda*, and wait for the moving of the Waters; set your selves as in the house of God, and remember though you see not God, that he is always present in all places, but he is there more especially present, where his people meet together to attend upon him in his own Ordinances? Wherefore when you come to hear the Word, set your self as in the presence of God, and hear as for your life and Soul, *Deut.* 32. 46. *Set your hearts to all the words that you shall hear; for it is not a vain thing, it is your life,* Isa. 55. 2, 3. *Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your Soul delight it self in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your Soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.* He that hath ears to hear let him hear, what the mighty *Jehovah* is speaking to his Soul. Wherefore I say it again, set your self as in the very immediate presence of God; and when you hear a word that you are very nearly concerned in, put up such a short Ejaculation as this: Now Lord, strike this hard heart of mine; now Lord, come in I beseech thee; O that this word might be the key which might open my heart for the King of Glory to come in? O command thy loving kindness this day to break into my Soul? O that this might be the day in which Salvation might come unto my house! O that this might be the man that might be my Spiritual Father, that this might be the Messenger one among a thousand, that may bring me good tidings? O

that

hat this might be the ſentence, that this might be the hour of Love? O that this might be the day that I may have in everlaſting remembrance? O that I might preſently without any more delay, ſet out for *Canaan?* Cry out with as much earneſtneſs as that poor man did, who brought his poſſeſſed child before Chriſt; O Lord I have brought my unbeliving heart before thee to cure, it expoſes me a thouſand times to unſpeakable hazards; but Lord, if thou wilt but ſpeak the word, it ſhall be diſpoſſeſſed; I would believe, Lord help my unbelief. I have brought my hard heart before thee, Lord ſoften it, and let me not go from time to time with theſe dreadful diſeaſes hanging about me, to infect, and undo my ſelf and others. O melt me, O Lord, melt me, and let me have ſuch a look from thee, as *Peter* once had, which made him to go out and weep bitterly. But I ſhall ſpeak a little more of this nature under another Direction.

VI. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, you muſt get acquainted with ſome of his Friends, and they will do all they can, and be glad of it too, to help you to be acquainted with him they will not ſpare to give you their utmoſt aſſiſtance in this great buſineſs. And when they ſhall hear you asking, what you ſhall do to know God, they are glad at their Heart, and will not be at quiet till they have got thee home with them to their Fathers Houſe; they watch for your Soul, and no greater Joy than to help forward ſuch a work as this, then to be imployed any way in the

ſervice of your Souls. They are glad vvhen they hear any ſaying, let us go to the houſe of the Lord, and asking the vvay to *Zion* vvith their faces thither-vvard. O! Chriſtians ſociety, good company is of exceeding uſe; one good ſervant in a houſe, the vvhole Family may fare the better for him. *Laban* and *Potiphar*, though ignorant enough in Spirituals, could not but obſerve this, that the Lord bleſſed their Families, for the ſake of one godly Servant. I do not ſpeak this only vvith reſpect to Temporals, becauſe of that Diligence, and Faithfulneſs in their places, that Religion vvill put them upon; but vvith reſpect to Spirituals, they vvill be dropping ſomething that may tend to the avvakening, and convincing of their ſleepy, unbelieving, ignorant companions: they have an invvard principle vvhich puts them upon communicating vvhat Grace they have received; they knovv the more they impart to others, the more they ſhall have themſelves; they have a Compaſſion for Souls, and vvould fain have as many as they can, along vvith them to Heaven; they vvill be teaching little Children to Pray, and Inſtilling ſomething that the very Babes may ſet forth Gods Praiſes, and they vvill be pleading vvith God for them. But this only by the by. Novv if thoſe that are gracious, endeavour vvhat they can to bring in thoſe that ore open enemies; hovv much more vvill they be ready to give all the help they can to you that earneſtly deſire it? Novv vvhen any one comes to this paſs, that he ſees a difference betvveen the godly and the vvicked, and to ſay that the righteous is more excellent than his Neighbour, and to have an earneſt deſire to aſſociate themſelves vvith them, it

is

a very great ſign that God hath an intention to do ſuch a Soul good. Wherefore if you would be brought to the knowledge of God, go ſpeedily to them that knovv him vvell; and they vvill tell you great things of him, and hovv they came firſt acquainted vvith him, and hovv this acquaintance hath been kept; they vvill tell you vvhere they firſt met him, they vvill give you to underſtand, that at ſuch and ſuch a time, vvhen they little thought of God, they vvere ſtrangely brought acquainted vvith him. When they came (out of Faſhion, or curioſity, or to laugh at him that taught them, or it may be to pick ſome Quarrel vvith him) to hear ſuch a man; they vvere made to ſee vvhat they never took any great notice of before, that they vvere in an undone condition by Nature, and that except Chriſt vvould pitty them, there vvas no remedy, but to Hell they muſt go; vvhereas before, they thought themſelves as ſafe as could be: But then they ſavv that it vvas no light matter to be out of Chriſt, and Aliens from the Common-wealth of *Iſrael*. After this, they vvere made to underſtand ſomething of Chriſts undertaking for poor loſt ſinners, and they heard of his exceeding vvillingneſs to receive the chiefeſt of ſinners, and that then they began to ſee an excellency in his love, and goodneſs, and to be ſomevvhat more taken vvith the kindneſs of Chriſt than ever thy vvere before, and they felt ſome longings after the precious Jeſus. O that they had but a Chriſt for their ſouls? and that after this they vvere by the Spirit of God, in ſome meaſure enabled to caſt themſelves at the feet of Chriſt for mercy, and that upon his ovvn terms, knovving that if mercy came

came not that way to them, they must sink for ever; and that upon this act of Recumbency after they had for some time waited upon God in the way of his ordinances, they began to taste and relish the things of God, and at last they met him whom their Souls loved. Inquire of them, I say, and they will talk thus to you, and tell you also, that there was a time wherein they were foolish, disobedient, and unto every good Work Reprobate, and miserably neglectful of their Souls, that they did not at all mind their Eternal welfare, but made light of Christ, made a mock of sin, and made nothing of Eternal Damnation. And they will direct, and encourage you also. Let me tell you, they have an interest in God, and their prayers for you may be more advantagious than you are aware of. Yet I would not that you should make Christs of the Saints, nor forget what is the work of the Mediator alone. Saints are to be valued, but Christ is to be valued infinitely more. Get acquainted with some warm rare experienced Christian, and make him your bosom Friend, and observe him, and you shall see much of the beauty of Religion shining in him, and you shall see how chearfully, and comfortably he walks; now ask him what his practice is, and go you, and do likewise, have a care of harbouring ill thoughts of the people of God, or for the sake of one Hypocrite of censuring a thousand sincere Ones. Judg you whether this be just, and equal doing? How would you like it, if one that bears some Relation to you should do some vile abominable thing, and bring himself to an untimely end, and people should say, all the whole Family is like him? though it

may

may be you are grieved to the very heart, that ſuch a thing ſhould be done by any in the vvorld, much more by any that bears any kind of Relation to your ſelf. I tell you, as contemptibly as the vvorld ſpeak of the godly, they are not ſuch odious Creatures as they are preſented to be. The Saints they are not Troublers, but Peace-makers; they love to make peace between man and man, and vvhat in them lies alſo between God and man: Your converſe vvith ſuch as fear the Lord, vvill make you like them, at leaſt they vvill endeavour as much. (*Ar. Epict.* l. 3 c. 16.) He ſpoke no untruth, who ſaid, *That company is of an aſſimulating Nature. A living coal laid to a heap of dead ones may kindle them all; but they are more like, except it be blown up, to put the live one quite out*; therefore ſaith the ſame Author, *You muſt be very cautious of your company.* It is ſtoried of *Socrates*, that he had a rare Are of making his familiar Friends of his mind. Some active Chriſtians take as much pains to make their familiars of Chriſts mind, *Prov.* 13. 20. *He that walketh with the wiſe, ſhall yet be wiſer, but a company of Fools ſhall be deſtroyed*, Prov. 10. 10, 21, 33. *The tongue of the juſt is as choiſe Silver, but the heart of the wicked is little worth. The lips of the Righteous feed many, but fools dye for want of wiſdom. The lips of the Righteous know what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked ſpeaketh froward things.* Such as theſe vvill do vvhat they can to make you out of love vvith ſin, and in love vvith God. Such as theſe will from their own experience be ſetting forth the goodneſs of God, and tell you that vvhich may ſtand you inſtead as long as you live; it may be they may tell you, that vvhen God began firſt to

vvork

vvork upon their Soul, he was pleaſed to make uſe of the particular Application, and the ſpiritual Converſation of ſuch a Chriſtian Relation; and, when God came in with Comfort, and ſpake peace ſuch a one led them to ſuch a Promiſe, which vvas like a Cordial to their fainting Soul. When they were abroad (they will tell you), and were neceſſitated to the company of them which were Strangers to the Life of Religion; and were at ſuch a time troubled with horrible Temptations; that they were in a Wilderneſs-condition, and thought that never any that vvalked Heaven-ward, could be in the like ſtate: But now, vvhen they got acquainted vvith the People of God, they found, that as Face anſwered Face in a Glaſs, ſo their Experience, and the Experience of many of the dear Children of God was exactly alike; and that, that vvhich they thought none in the World could parallel, they find that moſt of the Chriſtians that they meet with, know as well as themſelves, and at the firſt hearing, are able to go on with the Story before them; ſo that, they have ſometimes wondred hovv any one living ſhould know their Hearts and Thoughts ſo well, to whom they did not Communicate them. I think it not altogether impertinent here to inſert an Obſervation of mine own: I remember, when I vvas once ſpeaking concerning the duty of Chriſtians, in Relation to their Unconverted Friends, and urging them upon doing vvhat they could for God and Souls, in the places vvhere God hath ſet them: in ſpeaking to this ſubject, I ſaid, that there vvas not the meaneſt Chriſtian, but might be an inſtrument of the Converſion of a Soul: Upon this, I rehearſed a couple of Experiences that I had

of two persons, strangers one to the other, who gave this Account of their Conversion; they were upon the matter both alike, and therefore I shall tell but one of them, which take as follows. There was a Poor, Civil, yet very Carnal Creature, a Servant in a Religious Family, who did from his Soul Abhor the Spiritual Conversation of those in the Family, insomuch that he was resolved to run away from his Service, he was so weary of such doings: But one Night, hearing a strange sound somewhere, he arose out of his Bed, and went to listen what was the matter: Upon which, he heard one distinctly Praying on the other side of the Wall, he still hearkning, heard one Praying very earnestly for him (who did not know but that he might be Asleep) and opening the condition of his Soul so particularly, and with so much Tenderness, that he was wonderfully awakened to think that one that he hated should so much love him, and pity his Soul, and to consider how it was possible any one in the World should know his Thoughts so well as that Person did, who prayed for him; upon this he began to be very much Startled to think of his Condition, concluding thus, surely I am in a lamentable state, and they see it, or else they would never do as they do; they are Praying for me, when I am asleep, they love me when I hate them; upon this the man was very much troubled, and his trouble daily increased, till he was forced to open his Condition to the Person, who had been praying for him, which was a poor Maid-Servant: upon which the Work of Regeneration was carryed on very sweetly, and the Man became an excellent Christian, whereas the Instrument that

God

God used in this great Work was but a poor servant. Now when I Rehearsed this thing which was the Condition of two, as I said before, a third person stood by (whom I never saw in my life before) who fell a Sweating for trouble, that any of his Friends should tell such a thing of him, to me, and thought I had meant himself in all the particulars, though I heard not a word of the man before in my Life. This by the by. I could not but hint this for the encouragement of Parents to get their Children into Families that are really Religious, and to Encourage all to Associate themselves to such as fear the Lord. You see by what hath been spoken, that Acquaintance with the people of God, may be of great use for the bringing the Soul Acquainted with God.

VII. DIRECTION.

If you would be Acquainted with God; entertain all the Messengers that he Sends to you kindly. When God Calls, Answer, and when he sends any of His Servants to you, bid them Welcome; let the feet of those which bring glad Tidings be Beautiful in your Eye; do not think much if they deal plainly and roundly with you, know that it is out of Love to your Souls (God is their Witness) they see that your condition requires it, and that a man in your state is not to be jested with. The Lord knows that they take little pleasure in grieving of people; they do it that you may rejoyce for ever, they watch for your Souls, and therefore you must account them Worthy of double Honour. But of all the Messengers that God sends, have the greatest care of dealing unkindly

kindly with, and grieving his ſpirit; vvhen you have any motions upon your Soul by the Spirit, labour to cheriſh them vvith all the care and tenderneſs that you can: Turn not Convictions away with, I am not at Leaſure; or I will hear you of theſe things when I have a more convenient Seaſon: But as ſoon as you find your heart begin to relent, cry out unto the Lord, and ſay, O Lord, I beſeech thee, carry on thy work effectually upon my Soul. O that I may have through vvork! O let not theſe Convictions vvear off from my Soul, till they end in a real Converſion! O let me not prove but a Half-Chriſtian! Any thing in the World, Lord, ſo that I may but be made a Chriſtian in good earneſt! O let me not return vvith the Dog to his Vomit, and with the Sow that is vvaſhed, to her Wallowing in the Mire! Deliver me, O God, from ſinning away theſe things, and getting into a cold World, and from ſhaking off all, leſt I prove vvorſe than ever, and my latter end be more miſerable than my beginning. Labour to be very Curious in the taking notice of Gods Abſence or Preſence; and vvhen you find your Soul raiſed in any Duty, and your Heart ſomewhat drawn out after God, then be ſure to own Gods goodneſs, and bleſs the Lord for it; Record his Kindneſs, forget not his Mercy, paſs not over ſuch great things in ſilence. Little do Men think vvhat a hazard they run, vvhen they quench the Motions of Gods Spirit. You may Read in the 5. *Cant.* how dearly the Spouſe had like to have paid for ſuch an unkindneſs? What, ſhall God ſend his Spirit to viſit you? Shall the infinite Majeſty ſo far condeſcend as to knock at your Door, and will not you open?

Why

why then, you may thank your ſelves if he never knock more. But if you will now open to him, he will come into you, and ſup with you, and you ſhall ſup with him.

VIII. DIRECTION.

Seek his Aquaintance moſt earneſtly if you would have it. O why do Men and Women jeſt with matters of the greateſt Weight and Importance in the World? What do people mean to play with their Souls, the Wrath of God, and Damnation? O Sinners, have you nothing elſe to play with? No lower matters to ſport with? Believe it Sirs, Heaven and Glory are not got with ſitting ſtill with our Hands in our Pockets. We think it worth the while to Riſe Early, and to ſit up Late, to get an earthly Eſtate; we count it no fooliſh thing for a man to be very diligent about his Worldly Affairs. The poor Country-man Plows and Sows, Harrows, Weeds, Reaps, Inns, Threſheth, and a great deal more, before he can eat his Bread: And ſhall we look for a Rich Crop, and do nothing at all but Eat, and Drink, and Sleep? Is this the way to be Rich? Is this the way to be happy for ever? If you intend to do any thing in Religion to any purpoſe, you muſt buckle to your Buſineſs at another gueſs rate than moſt of the Profeſſors of the World do: We muſt take as much pains about our Souls, as men do about their Bodies or Eſtates. Is there any compariſon between the Soul and the Body; between a Worldly Eſtate, and an Heavenly Inheritance? Hath a man more Reaſon to look after tricking up his Body that muſt Die, or look after the Adorning

adorning of his ſoul that muſt live ſomevvhere for ever? VVhich are matters of the greateſt conſequence, eating and drinking, pampering the fleſh, and taking our pleaſure; or looking after Life, Salvation, and Eternal Joy? Do you think that the Scripture ſaith in vain, *That we muſt ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait Gate?* Is it a bare ſeeking that vvill ſerve the turn? Will a *Lord have mercy upon me*, and bovving the knee, do as vvell as the greateſt ſerioufneſs and diligence in the World? Do you think that God vvill be put off vvith the skin and garbage inſtead of ſacrifice, vvith the ſhell inſtead of the kernel, vvith chaff inſtead of the Corn? Doth not Chriſt ſay, *That many ſhall ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able?* O vvhy do not lazy Profeſſors read the Scriptures with trembling? Let all thoſe that are angry vvith us for putting them upon making Religion their buſineſs, and uſing all diligence *to make their calling and election ſure*, Read that one Scripture over again, *Luk.* 13. 24. *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait Gate; for many, I ſay unto you, will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able*, &c. It vvas Chriſt vvho ſpoke that vvord. If vve tell you of the danger of a formal Religion, you vvill ſoon fall upon us as Enemies to your peace, and thoſe vvhich impoſe too much ſtrictneſs upon you: VVe therefore do here produce our Commiſſion for vvhat vve ſay, or rather vve deſire you but to read your ſelves vvhat Chriſt ſpoke, as touching this matter. O it might juſtly make a Chriſtians heart to ake, to think hovv many thouſands of Profeſſors vvill be diſovvned by Chriſt in that day, vvho vvill make many fair pleas for themſelves, and pretend a great deal of acquaintance vvith him. Conſider I

beseech you, here is no fear of Excess; never any man in the World that was too Solicitous about his Salvation, never any man took too much pains for Heaven. Awake, O sleeper, what meanest thou? Arise, and call upon thy God. If you make any thing of the loss of a Soul, look about you; if you think the wrath to come considerable, be serious; if you would not be burnt by the fire of his Indignation, you must take hold of his strength, and make peace with him, and God will be at peace with you, *Isa.* 27. 5. It is not without cause, that the Prophet doth complain, *Isa.* 64. 7. *There is none that calls upon thy Name that stirs up himself to take hold on thee. There is none that calls upon Gods Name!* One would think that, that were strange; What none call upon his Name, when so many of them made many Prayers, as you have it in the first of *Isaiah*? What did they nothing but look upon one another, when they had their Solemn Assemblies? Did they say nothing to God, when they came before him? Did they do nothing at all in that 58. of *Isaiah*, when they are said to seek him daily, when they seemed to delight in his way? Yet in Gods esteem, all this goes for nothing at all, this prayer is no prayer, this is only wording of it with God: But prayer it is another kind of thing, it is the stirring up of the Soul, and a wakening all it's strength to wrestle with God, to lay hold upon God, and to prevail with the Almighty; and where are such as these to be found, who is this that engages his heart in the service of God? It is one thing to engage the tongue, and another thing to engage the heart. Men come to pray with a common Spirit, and are many times weary of

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the work before they have well begun it; what they do, they do it lifeleſsly: They can follow their worldly Imployments with life and delight. They have Male in their flock, but that's too good for God; a lame, blind, ſtarved weak thing muſt ſerve his turn: And is this the vvay to have the bleſſing? Are ſuch as theſe like to have any thanks for their kindneſs? Let them try hovv any of their Friends would take ſuch a preſent. Novv would you have the Bleſſing of Acquaintance with *God*, you muſt vvreſtle for it, and not let *God* go vvithout it: You muſt be *Fervent in Spirit, ſerving the Lord*; you muſt *fight the Good fight of Faith, and lay hold on Eternal Life*: You muſt graſp about Chriſt, as a man that is a drovvning vvould graſp any thing that vvere throvvn out to ſave him: You muſt uſe *all diligence to make your Calling and Election ſure*: You *muſt work out your Salvation with fear and trembling*: You muſt *ſeek for Wiſdom as for Silver, and ſearch for her as for hidden Treaſure. Then ſhalt you underſtand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.* What excellent thing is there, that is not vvithout pains? Whoever came to be an Exquiſite curious Artiſt in any skil vvhatever, that never ſerved an Apprentiſhip to it, nor at the leaſt gave his mind to it? Where is there a famous Phyſician that never ſtudied in his life? Who gets a victory by ſleeping and careleſsneſs? Who expects to have riches drop into his mouth vvhen he does all the vvays that can be to make himſelf a beggar? Doth the Husband-man look for a good crop vvithout plovving or Sovving? Why then ſhould vve expect ſuch great things as Heaven, Eternal happineſs, and the favour of *God*, with-

out looking after them. Whatsoever the Lazy formal professor may say, the Kingdom of Heaven is not obtained thus: there must be Running, Watching, Fighting, Conquering, holding fast, holding out, and all little enough; it requires all the strength of thy soul to engage in this great work; it requires some resolution to do such a work, as every Christian must do, or else his Religion signifies little. Further, it calls for some time too, it is not a thing to be minded, now and then by the by, between sleep and wake, when the Devil and the World have had as much service as they call for. Were it for your bodies that I were now pleading; were you like to get any great matter in the World by following of my Directions; could you be shew'd away how to get a great estate, honours, and long life, I am verily perswaded a few words might prevail much. Why, if you will believe the word of God, I am telling you of other kind of things then these be, greater matters by far; and yet how little are Men and Women affected? As if we spoke but in jest always, when we spoke about things that did concern Souls! How little time do men spend in their inquiry into these things? Ask *Epictetus* (*Ench.* c. 63) And he will tell you that it is a sign of a low Soul, to bestow much time upon thy body, and the thoughts of it, and little upon the Soul; to be long eating, and long drinking, and long a dressing, and short in prayer, short in the thoughts of the Soul, and short in the service of God; and that it is a sign of a base degenerate Spirit to be very curious about toys, and inconsiderable trifles, and to be negligent about matters of the greatest importance, to slubber o-

over

ver the great vvorks of Religion vvith the greateſt lightneſs. Remember, O man, thy great vvork, it is to take care of thy Soul, to look after a Companion, a Friend for thy Soul, to get food and cloathing for thy Soul, that that famiſh not vvith hunger and cold. To be indifferent in all externals is the greateſt prudence; but to be indifferent about Spirituals and Eternals is the greateſt madneſs. VVe are all Souldiers, and muſt fight in ſuch a VVar vvherein vve muſt never lay dovvn our Arms. The favour of God is vvorth the ſtriving for, it is as much as Heaven and Glory is vvorth. If your eſtate or life lay at ſtake, vvould you not be vvilling to uſe all the intereſt you could to make the Judge your friend? VVould you go up and down laughing as if you had nothing to do? would you eat and drink as merrily as ever, and ſay, it is but dying, it is but being a beggar, it is but the undoing of my wife and children? Would you not look upon a man that ſhould argue at this rate to be little better than Frantick? and I pray vvhich is moſt conſiderable, the death of the body, or the death of the Soul; the loſs of a temporal, or the loſs of an eternal inheritance. Moſt mens diligence in Temporals will condemn their negligence in Spirituals. Chriſt ſaid, *Seek ye firſt the Kingdom of Heaven, and the righteouſneſs thereof*; but moſt men ſay, I will ſeek firſt the Earth, and the glory thereof; and if God will give me Heaven and Happineſs after I have ſerved the Devil and the world as long as I can, I ſhall be contented to have it. No ſuch matter, never expect it, God muſt ſooner ceaſe to be than to gratifie you in this. VVherefore do you think, did *David* fol-

low his work so close? Why did all those Noble Worthies in the Church of old, take so much pains? Why should they not much stick to venture estates, and lives too? Will you condemn them all as guilty of too much curiosity, and unnecessary preciseness? Do you think that their labour was in vain? Are all those disappointed who willingly parted with present things for future things? I must tell you, if you expect to sit down with *Abraham, Isaac*, & *Jacob* in the Kingdom of Heaven, you must do as they did. Heaven will not be obtained now upon any lower term than then. Your Souls are as precious as their's, and Heaven will be as well worth your minding as theirs, and God will look upon you as well as upon them, if you will value his favour as they did. Never look to have God give you that which you will not thank him for. What do you say after all this? Will you sit down before your work is done? Open thine eyes, and consider what thou hast to do, and then tell me if it be not the greatest folly imaginable to be slight in these Affairs. O how can'st thou eat, or drink, or sleep, whilst thou hast such a great work to do which is undone! O give not sleep to thine eyes, or slumber to thine eye-leds, but deliver thy self from the hand of the Hunter, and as a Bird from the hand of Fowler. *Go to the* Ant *thou sluggard: Consider her ways, and be wise; which having no guide, over-seer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the Summer, and gathereth her meat in the Harvest.* How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? *Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep, so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.*

And

and will you now labour to get acquaintance with God, as you would to get Food for your body; will you endeavour as much to make sure of his love, as you would to make sure of a Pardon, in case of the forfeiture of your Life? If so, we have some hopes, the work may have some considerable Issue.

IX. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, be much in expostulating the case with God, in urging those Arguments which the Scripture doth afford you in such a case. Take with you words, and come unto the Lord, and spread your Requests before him, and say, *O Lord, thou hast sent thy Servants the Ministers, and hast invited me to come unto thee, and thou offeredst Peace and Reconciliation, and to be Acquainted with me. O God, I desire from my Soul, to come upon thy call, and would fain be Acquainted with thee. I see my self in an undone State, while I am a Stranger to thee: But O Lord, I have a Cursed base Heart that keeps me back from thee, and I can't tell what in the world to do. O Lord, I beseech thee help thy poor Creature to come unto thee, lead me by the Hand, let thy goodness and love constrain me, Conquer me by thy Kindness; come Lord into my Soul, and let me see thy Face, and look upon thee still I am in love with thee. O why art thou as a Stranger to me? Wilt thou forsake me for ever? Shall I be one of those thine Enemies which shall be Slain before thy Face? Shall I be one of those that shall dwell with everlasting Burnings? O Lord, pity, pity, pity, for Christ his sake, a poor Creature that would fain love thee, and be acquainted with thee. I am convinced that I must be damned without thee, and come to thee*

of my self I cannot. O draw me! O carry me! O compel me! constrain me, make me willing in the day of thy power: I cannot get looſe, my heart is too hard for me, my luſts are too ſtrong for me, my Temptations are too many for me to conquer of my ſelf. O Lord help me. Turn me, and I ſhall be turned. Pluck my feet out of the ſnare, or I ſhall be utterly deſtroyed for ever. Forgive mine iniquity, make me a clean heart, make me thy ſervant. Tell God that thou haſt heard of his goodneſs and mercy, and that the King of *Iſrael* is a merciful King, and that it is his nature to pity. Say to him, O I am a poor undone creature, and wilt thou ſend me away without mercy? will the God of Grace ſend me away without Grace? Haſt thou not called me, O God? thy ſervants tell me ſo, O Lord ſpeak and give me ears to hear; O Lord I am come in upon thy merciful Proclamation, and I deſire to lay my ſelf at thy feet; mercy Lord, mercy upon what terms thou pleaſeſt. Didſt thou not ſay in thy Word, *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come, and buy Win and Milk without Money, and without price.* Have not thy ſervants pleaded with me to come? and haſt thou not ſent for me? O! a bleſſing, a bleſſing for me, even for me? O my Father! Haſt thou not a bleſſing for me? Shall I be ſent away as I came? O Lord, I come at thy Word! Do not ſay unto me, Be gone out of my ſight. I cannot go, I will not go; whither ſhall I go from thee? For thou haſt the words of Eternal Life. Though I cannot ſay, Be juſt to me a Saint, yet I will ſay, Be merciful to me a ſinner. You may read more in *R. A.* his firſt part of his *Vindiciæ Pietatis*, pag. 232, the whole Treatiſe is excellent. Plead the blood of Chriſt; you may ſafely

ſay,

ſay, that if there be not enough in Chriſt to ſave you, you do not deſire Salvation: for in him there is all fulneſs. You may plead your own abſolute neceſſity. Tell God, that if ever poor Creature in the World had need of mercy, you have; tell him that you are reſolved not to be content without his love. You may plead his promiſe, in which he hath ſaid, *That he will take away the heart of ſtone, and give a heart of fleſh; and that he will put his fear in our hearts, and write his laws in our inward parts.* You may plead alſo the power of God, whereby he is able to ſubdue all things unto himſelf; and many ſuch like arguments, you may find in many places in the Scripture. But becauſe I have touched upon this before, I ſhall paſs this by.

X. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, look after it ſpeedily, deſer not a Moment, your enemy is Marching on apace, you may be Surprized, your ſoul is haſting upon it's Eternal eſtate, your glaſs is almoſt run, there are but a few ſands behind; therefore ſeek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near: Ere long it will be too late; Wherefore what thou doſt, do quickly. What is the Voyce both of Scripture and Providence? Doth not the Word of God ſay *Now*, and commend the preſent time above all. Acquaint *now* thy ſelf with him; Remember *now* thy Creatour; Turn *now* unto the Lord. Let a poor Heathen (*Epict. En.* c. 75) ſhame you into greater ſpeed in this neceſſary work. I ſhall tranſlate his words into *Engliſh*: *How long*, ſaith he, *will you defer the looking after the beſt*

best things? How long will you abuse your Reason? Have you not heard such Precepts vvhich you ought to agree to, and you seemed very vvell to like of? VVhat kind of Teacher is it that you stay for? For vvhose coming do you defer, before you will mend and turn? You are come now to years of discretion (if I should say you vvere not, you vvould be angry) if you will neglect and delay, and add one delay to another, if you vvill add one put off to another, and make one resolution and purpose after another, and set one day after another, in which you vvill think of these things; consider that all this will do you no good, for all your resolutions and promises, for all that I see, you are like to die a common man, therefore now live as a perfect growing Man; and follow that which is most Excellent unalterably. If any thing of difficulty intervene, remember that now is the time for you to shew what respect you have for your God and your Soul. Remember the Goal is not far off, and that now you must not falter, and that as you demean your self now, it may be you may be happy or miserable while you have a Being. This is the Language of that excellent Moralist. I add, what is it, O Sinner, that thou stayest for? Is it for the day of Judgment? VVould you be taught by Flames, the worth of Time? You may then indeed learn; but believe it, your Knowledge and Learning will do you little good; you may then learn vvhat it is to be miserable, but you can't learn how to get out of it, you will know vvhat you have lost, but then vvill never know how to repair your Losses. How many Thousands of them vvhich have set a day, in vvhich they would return and Repent, have set

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and ſet, and ſet it again, and what with one thing or other they could not be at leaſure to repent till they came to Hell; and there indeed they have leiſure enough to repent, and they do repent too, if Hell-Repentance would do any thing: I believe that all that come there do repent and believe too more than they did while they were alive; but then it's too late. They that are now in thoſe dreadful Flames, many of them thought, it may be, of repenting before they died as well as you, and did juſt as you do. O that you would underſtand your ſelves before your ſtate be like theirs! How infinitely doth it concern you to improve time, and to comply with the preſent tender of mercy that are made to you: For ere long it may be too late for you too. O know this therefore, that *now* thy God makes thee a gracious offer of pardon; and if you refuſe *now*, this may be the laſt time, this may be the very caſt for Eternity. God may ſay before to morrow, *This night thy Soul ſhall be required of thee.* Go to therefore, you that talk of trading for the great things of Eternity, I do not know when, thirty or forty years hence, Do you not know that your life is but a blaſt? When your breath goes out of your Noſtrils, you are not ſure that you ſhall draw it in again. What then do you mean to talk of delay? have you not ſtaid long enough already? conſider man what thou doſt. He that ſaith he will be good to morrow, he ſaith he will be wicked to day. And what if God ſhould ſay, thou ſhalt have the pleaſure of ſin to day, and the ſorrow of ſin to morrow? Thou ſhalt be hardned to day, and damned to morrow? If your houſe were on fire, you would ſcarce ſay, I will go and

ſleep

ſleep four or five hours, and then I vvill riſe and call my Neighbours to help to quench it. If your Child vvere a drovvning, you vvould ſcarce ſay, I muſt needs ſtay till I have drunk a flaggon or tvvo more, and about half an hour hence it may be I may go and ſee vvhether I can get a Boat to help him out. If you vvere condemned to dye to morrovv, you vvould ſcarce ſay, I vvill have Muſick, and Sack, and good company all night, and then I vvill ſend a Meſſenger if I can get one to ride a Hundred Mile to try vvhether he can get a Pardon for me. Yet thus for all the vvorld thou doſt do in the great affairs of thy immortal Soul. *O the folly of man* (ſaith *Seneca*) *who thinks to begin to live, when a thouſand to one but he will be dead and rotten!* I may ſay, O the madneſs of ſinners, who make account to be looking after Heaven then, vvhen it's likely their ſouls may be in Hell! Judge novv vvhether this be vviſdom. Novv you think time one of the pooreſt commodities in the VVorld, it's a very Drugg vvhich lies upon your hand, a day or tvvo, a vveek, a year is no great matter vvith you: but believe it, the caſe vvill be altered vvith a vvitneſs ere long. *Seneca* vvondred vvhen he heard ſome asking one of his friends for to ſpend tvvo or three vveeks vvith them vvhen he ſavv hovv eaſily the requeſt vvas granted, as if they asked as little as nothing, vvhen they ask'd time of him: *Thus* (ſaith he) *one of the preciouſeſt things in the world is thrown away as little worth.* When you come to lie upon your death-bed, vve ſhall have you have other thoughts of time: then, a vvorld, if you had it, for one of thoſe hours, that you could not tell hovv to ſpend. You novv ſtudy hovv to rob your ſelf of your precious time, you invent

paſtimes,

paſtimes, not conſidering hovv ſvviftly time flies, and hovv much you vvill prize it before long. O remember, no body can give you a Moment of that time vvhen you vvant it, that you are hovv ſo prodigal of. VVhen time is paſt, if you vvould give a vvorld to recal it, it could not be: If you vvould give thouſands for the renevving of this Leaſe, it vvould be refuſed. Therefore live quickly. Mans time runs avvay firſt. *Optima quaqua dies miſeris mortalibus ævi, prima fugit--Seneca.* And then my Author Comments very bravely upon the the vvhole verſe.

I think that Proverb, though it be an *Italian* one, is vvorth our remembring, *He that will lodge well at night, muſt ſet out betimes in the morning.* That vvhich keeps us from living to day, is the thoughts of living to morrovv, ſo that vve loſe this day vvhile vve expect the next. *Commenius* peaking of the *Tyger*, ſaith, *That when he hears the ſound of the Trumpet, he tears and bites himſelf.* This vvill be the vvork of the mercileſs Tygers of the vvorld, that ſpend their time (in vvhich they ſhould be providing for Eternity) in hunting Gods people, and taking their pleaſures; and it may be, think to be a little more mild before they die; but of a ſudden the Trumpet ſounds, Avvay, avvay: and O then vvhat a lamentable taking are they in! Hovv do they vviſh for time again, or that they had ſpent that vvhich they had better? VVicked men never knevv the vvorth of time, till they come to a Death-bed, or a vvhile after. O then, they that made nothing of ſpending thirty to fourty years, vvould lay dovvn all they are vvorth for one year, one month, one day, one hour, but it's then too late. O hovv do they gnaſh their teeth!

teeth! With what horrour do they think of paſt mercies, and future miſeries! Men fear generally that Death will come ſooner than they would have him; they bewail that their lives are ſhort at the longeſt, whereas if men would wiſely Husband that time that God hath given them, it would be long enough: O happy is that man that hath done his great Work before his Sun is ſet? O fooliſh men that complain of God for making their lives ſo ſhort, and complain not at all of themſelves for making them ten times ſhorter: For moſt men lives not at all the life of Religion, and may be called Dead. Others have a name to live, and yet are little better than the former. Moſt that live ſpiritually, begin their life after they have been many years dead; and though we ſit and condemn others as guilty of great imprudence in theſe affairs, yet, how do we at the ſame time juſtifie them, by being as profuſely expenſive of precious time as they? O where's the man almoſt to be found, that doth improve time to as good advantage as he ſhould? Among other Symptomes of a fool, this is none of the leaſt, *To be always beginning to live.* What an unhandſome ſight is it to ſee an old man learning his Letters? O remember man thou haſt a great work to do! O remember thy precious time runs away with an unſpeakable ſwiftneſs! What do you mean, to ſit with your hands in your boſom? Look about thee, O ſinner, 'tis not time a day for you to be ſleeping or playing; Methinks a man in your condition ſhould be up and doing with all the diligence that you could for your ſoul, and labouring *to make your calling and election ſure*, methinks we ſhould hear you asking, what you

ſhall

ſhall do to get a Pardon for your ſins, to get God reconciled to you. Methinks you ſhould be enquiring what you ſhould do to redeem your time, and to ſpend every Moment of it ſo to the beſt advantage, as that you may appear chearfully before your Maſter at night. That I may inforce this weighty Direction, I ſhall propound a few ſerious Queſtions to you.

Queſt. 1. Do you thing that theſe things are neceſſary, or are they not? If they be neceſſary, why do you not mind them ſpeedily? If they be not neceſſary, do not look after them at all.

Queſt. 2. Do you expect to be in a better capacity to look after theſe things hereafter? Do you hope for more ſtrength, when you are worn out with ſin and age, when your back begins to bend, and your joynts to ſhake? Do you think you ſhall be more at leiſure, when your work will be much increaſed? Know this, that ſin grows upon you daily, it preys upon your Vitals: He that is not fit to day, will be leſs fit to Morrow. As for leiſure, I muſt confeſs you may have leiſure enough in another World, to think of theſe things. But I wiſh you well to conſider whether it be great Wiſdom to repent in this World, or in another. I would be loath to be repenting in another, it's ſad Weeping indeed there, where tears ſhall never be dried up. I have told you oft that God ſaith, to day, and it is both wickedly and fooliſhly done of man to ſay, to Morrow. I muſt tell you but ſo, that it is a dreadful hazard that every delaying Sinner doth run: It is a queſtion whether God may not deny his Grace, ſtop the Preachers mouth, ſtop his ears, and ſtop your breath; And where are you then with your to Morrow?

morrow? delays in these affairs always cost dear; they have cost many thousands dear already, and if you make no more hast than you have done, they will cost you dear too.

Quest. 3. When would you get acquainted with God? When he hath shut up his door? When would you run his race? When you have lost your legs, or can but creep with Crutches? Is that the best time to do your work in, when it is next to impossible to do it?

Quest. 4. Who deserves best at your hands, the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, or God? Resolve me this I pray? VVhom do you call your Master? VVhom have you most reason to make hast for?

Quest. 5. How would you take it, if any of them which depend upon you, should serve you as you serve God?

Quest. 6. Do you think you can make too much hast? VVho is afraid of being Rich too soon? Although a man may with reason good enough be afraid of that which may make his happiness far more uncertain, and his miseries more intollerable. VVho fears to make too much hast when his Prince sends for him with speed? O that men did but know, who it is that calls them, and whether they are going, and what they have to do, when they come to their journies end!

Quest. 7. Are you sure you shall live till you are an hour older? You are strong and healthful it may be, but did you never hear that such have dyed vvith a very little vvarning? Have you never known a man vvell one hour, and dead the next? If you have not, I tell you of one novv, that vvas very

very vvell one moment, and dead the next, my ſelf being an eye-vvitneſs of it. It's poſſible there may be but one ſmall moment betvveen a ſtrong vvorking healthful man, and a breathleſs Corps.

Queſt. 5. What do you think vvill become of you, I ask again, if you put off till it be too late?

Queſt. 9. What vvould you do, if you vvere ſure you ſhould die, or the day of Judgement come before you vvere a vveek older?

Queſt. 10. Do you think to get acquainted vvith God in another vvorld, vvhen you do not mind him here? Will God think you ovvn them hereafter, that diſovvn him here? Will he knovv them in Heaven, vvho vvould not knovv him upon the Earth?

XI. DIRECTION.

If you vvould be acquainted vvith God, take heed of thoſe things, vvhich keep *God* and man at a diſtance, and make the Lord take no pleaſure in us. In general, take heed of all ſin, *Waſh you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from mine eyes, ceaſe to do evil, learn to do good, ſeek judgement, relieve the oppreſſed, judge the Fatherleſs, and plead the cauſe of the Widow. Come now, and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord,* Iſa. 1. 17, 18. You muſt vvaſh your hands in Innocency if you intend to compaſs his Altar, to ſit dovvn at his Table. In *Pſal.* 101. *David* is exceeding deſirous of *Gods* company, and he cries out, *O when wilt thou come unto me!* He thinks long to have a viſit from his old friend; he vvould gladly vvalk vvith him. Novv vvhat courſe doth he take to get *Gods*

company? VVhy, he goes the best way to work in the world: He will set no wicked thing before his eyes. He knows it is to no purpose for him to expect much of Gods company, while he doth entertain his greatest enemies; therefore he turns them out of doors; I hate, saith he, the works of them that turn aside, it shall not cleave to me. And that God may dvvell vvith him, and make his house, as vvell as his heart, a Temple for himself, he vvill not suffer a vvicked person to live in it, he will have none in his Family, but such as shall be ready to serve God, and bid this his great Friend welcome.

But more particularly, if you would have much of Gods company, and be intimately acquainted vvith him; take heed more especially of those particular sins vvhich make God most to estrange himself from us: As,

First, Take heed of Pride: That vvas the sin vvhich made the first breach betvveen the Creature and the Creator, the sin that sunk the Angels, that made God and them, vvho vvere very good Friends once, to be bitter enemies; this hath made the breach infinite, the feud everlasting, the vvound incurable. And this made the first Quarrel betvveen God and man. When man thinks himself too good to be but a man, he must be a God; he quickly is too bad to be a man, he is but one remove from the Devil. To be a favoprite of his Prince is not enough, except he may step into the Throne; it's therefore high time for his Prince to remove such from his presence to a Prison, from the Court to a Dungeon. It vvas Pride that cast *Adam* out of Paradise; and do you think that that sin is less hateful to God

God, and leſs dangerous to man, than it vvas five thouſand years ago? Did it then ſpend all it's poyſon? And can it novv do no harm? Do you believe that God vvill take that into his boſome novv, that formerly he abhorred to look upon? Novv ſin hath increaſed it's ſtrength and deformity, and heightened it's ennity againſt the infinite Majeſty of the holy *Jehovah*; ſhall his hatred againſt it decreaſe? VVill he be more vvilling to accompany proud aſpiring Rebels novv than then? No ſuch matter: God is ſtill as holy as ever, and hates all ſin, eſpecially pride as much as ever. Do you think that it is for nothing that the word of God ſpeaks ſo much againſt this ſin? Can it be that the Holy-Ghoſt would ſay, *Prov.* 11. *That every one that is proud, is an abomination to the Lord*, except God did indeed hate them? Why ſhould God threaten ſuch ſo much, if he took any pleaſure in their Society? *Though hand joyn in hand, yet the proud ſhall not go unpuniſhed. Now we call the proud happy, but ſhall we call him ſo, when the day of the Lord ſhall burn as fire, and all the proud ſhall be as ſtubble: And the day that cometh ſhall burn them up, ſaith the Lord, and it ſhall leave them neither root nor branch. When the Lord ſhall tread down the wicked, and they ſh ll be like Aſhes under his feet, Mal.* 3. 15. and 4. 1, 3. There is not one proud man in Heaven, I am ſure; Nor a proud man upon the Earth, that ſhall have much of Gods acquaintance. And let me ſay, he that lets himſelf above God (for that's the Pride I mean) whileſt he ſtands in that ſtate, muſt never expect that God ſhould look upon him with any kindneſs. Heaven and Hell will as ſoon be agreed, as God and ſuch a one ſhall be united. The

proud now overlook others that are their betters, and scorn their Maker; but shortly they shall be paid in their own coyn, they shall be scorned too. If all the proud *Nimrods*, *Pharaohs* and *Belshazzers* in the world should enter into a League, and combine against the Almighty, and say, they will cast away his cords from them, and that they will never debase their noble Spirit so low as to stoop to his commands; yet none of them all shall go unpunished: They shall be like stubble before the devouring flames, and like Chaff before a mighty whirlwind: God is not afraid of their big looks, *Prov.* 21. 4. *Prov.* 6. 17. *Prov.* 15. 25. *Isa.* 2. 12. *Luke* 1. 51. *Jam.* 4. 6. God will cloath himself with Vengeance, and the mighty *Jehovah* will gird his weapon upon his thigh, and march out in fury and Indignation, and draw his glittering Sword, and resist the proud, and teach them what it is to bid defiance to the Lord of Host. We shall soon see, who shall be uppermost, God or they. And when the proud sinner lies conquered at his feet, how doth he with infinite scorn look upon him, and say, behold, the man is become like one of us! This 'tis for man to attempt the dethroning of the Almighty! But it may be, most may think themselves little concerned in that which I now speak; wherefore I must add this one word. Be it known unto thee, O man, whosoever thou art, that thinkest thou hast no pride; I am sure thou art one of those that are in that black Roll which have proclaimed War against Heaven; thou art the man that shall never be acquainted with *God* whilst thou art in that mind. It may be thou may'st speak Peace to thy self for all this, and flatter

flatter thy ſelf as if *God* and you vvere Friends: but let me tell thee, I come vvith heavy tydings in my mouth to thee: If thou turn not, he vvill vvhet his Svvord, he hath bent his Bovv, and made it ready, he hath prepared for thee the Inſtruments of Death, the day of thy Calamity is near: The dreadful *Jehovah* is upon his March; and if you aſk me vvhether there be not Peace for thee, I anſvver as *Jehu* did to *Jehoram*, vvhat peace, O haughty ſinner, ſo long as the pride of thy heart is ſo great, and thy Rebellions againſt thy Maker ſo many? There is no Peace ſaith my *God* to the Wicked. VVherefore as you value your Soul, as you tender your everlaſting Salvation, and deſire to be ovvned by the Lord in the day of your diſtreſs, take heed of pride. Go quickly, and humble your ſelf, and make ſure your friend; labour to pull dovvn every high Thought, and every proud Imagination; and let your Arrogant Spirit bovv before the mighty God, there is no vvay vvill do but this; as you have already heard: You muſt ſet the Crovvn upon the Lord's head, you muſt lay your ſelves at his feet, and lick the very duſt. Your betters have done ſo before you, and have thought it their Honor to lie at the feet of Chriſt; this they look'd upon (as vvith good reaſon too) as the firſt ſtep to preferment. If therefore you vvould be acquainted vvith God, take heed of pride.

Secondly, Take heed of a vvorldly mind. VVhat concord is there betvveen Earth and Heaven? VVhat agreement betvveen *God* and the VVorld? VVhat Delight can his Holineſs take in him, vvho had rather be vvallovving in the Mud and treading of Clay, than bathing himſelf in

Divine contemplation: that thinks it higher preferment to sit by his bags of Gold, than to stand in the presence of his God: a greater happiness to be rich, than to be holy; that had much rather be in a Fair Market, or Exchange, getting money, than with his God, getting Pardon, Grace and Heaven. How pregnant is the Scripture of proofs for the evidencing of this truth? To name one or two of a hundred, *Rom.* 8. 7. *To be carnally minded is enmity against God: For it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can it be.* What do you say to this Scripture? Those which walk with God, live in the world, and yet they live above the World; they all look for a City that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. It was not for nothing that the Apostle *John* layes so strict a charge upon those which he wrote to, *That they should not love the world, nor the things of the world: For if any love the world, the love of the Father is not in them,* 1 *John* 2. 15. Whence is it that so few great ones go to Heaven, and that it is next to impossible for such to be saved? Is it not because they have chosen *Mammon* for their Friend, rather than God? He hath their heart, their Love, their Time, their Service, and they have little to spare for God, and therefore God hath but a little happiness, a little heaven, a short glory for them, they shall have but a little of his sweet company, little Acquaintance with him. Why doth *James* speak so terribly to the rich men, & bid them go, and weep and howl? Was it not because their riches were like to undoe them? Did the wealthy man in the Parable live ever the longer for his riches, or fare ever the better for his greatness, when he came into another World? There is no

question

question but he might have more flatteries; there is no doubt but he hath more worldly Friends; but bring me a man upon the Earth, that lets his heart without controle fly upon the World, cleaves to it, and takes it to be his best friend, that knows God, that's acquainted with his Maker, that prizeth his Redeemer. It was a wise man, who said, that it's absolutely impossible to mind externals and internals, this world and another, with earnestness at the same time: but it was Wisdom it self who said, *That no Servant can serve two Masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other; ye cannot serve God and Mammon, Mat.* 5. 24. &c.

3. Take heed of Hypocrisie. Who are the persons that God doth Denounce his dreadful threatnings against? Are they not such as honour him with their Lips, when their Hearts are far from him? With what Abhorrency doth he look upon such, and all that they do? *Isa.* 1. They never bring their heart to visit God with, and therefore they have little reason to expect that he should bring his dainties to entertain them with.

4. If you would be acquainted with God, take heed of being acquainted with wicked Company. We Read that many wicked men have fared the better for the Company of the Godly; but we scarce ever heard that any Godly Man ever fared the better for being in the Company of the Wicked, except they went on Gods Errand amongst them. This is clear in the case of *Lot*, who first lost his goods, and was made a Captive by being in *Sodom*; and though they were restored to him

again for a while, (one would have thought that should have been a fair warning how he came again into such company) yet because that would not do, a while after you may read how dear *Lot* paid for dwelling in *Sodom*. Poor man! he lost all that he had, and was fain to fly away without either Flocks or Herds, and little more than his cloathes on his back; and that which was more sad, to leave some of his own dear Relations behind him, roasting in those dismal flames. Whereas had he never come to *Sodom*, or upon the sight of their wickedness speedily left them, it had been much better with him in many respects. *Jehosaphat* fared never the better for joyning in affinity with his wicked Neighbours, it had like to have cost him his life. But were it, only loss of Temporals that a man hazarded by such Society, the danger were not so considerable; but the peril is greater than so; for by it they make God stand at a distance; they must never look to have such company, and Gods company both together; I mean, when they do unnecessarily or delightfully converse with God. If therefore you intend to be acquainted with God, you must not have them always in your company whom he hates, and which hate him, and will labour all they can to cool your affections towards him. Wherefore, be ye not unequally yoaked with unbelievers: For, what Fellowship hath Righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with *Belial*? Or what part hath he that believeth with an Infidel? And what agreement hath the Temple of God with Idols? For ye are the Temple of the living God, as God hath said,

I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my People; wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my Sons and Daughters, saith the Lord Almighty, 2 Cor. 6. 14. to the end. But I would not here be mistaken, as if I would commend an ungodly proud separation from all that are not just of our mind; or as if a man ought to have nothing at all to do with wicked men; no, no: Every one ought to do what he can in his place for the good of Souls. O that Christians would thus converse more with their poor, ignorant, carnal, Christless Neighbours! O that they would thus be more acquainted with the wicked, and then they should have never the less of *Gods* company, but the more; but it is an unnecessary delightful associating of our selves with them that I mean, especially such of them which will stifle every spiritual discourse, and divert you from any thing that tends to the promoting of the interest of Religion; and such as have frequently expressed their detestation of the way of Holiness, and make but a mock at your serious Counsels, stop their ears to wholesome Advice, or make some undecent reflections upon the strict profession of Godliness; such as labour to make you believe that all Religion, but that which will consist with their wickedness is but a Fancy. As for such as those, abhor their company, flye from them as those that have the Plague, the marks of Death are upon them, and you may write *Lord have mercy upon us* upon their Doors, but go not in, lest you be infected.

5. If

5. If you would be acquainted with God, take heed of unbelief. Unbelief will make your soul depart from God, and God quite to depart from your soul. This, This is one of those dreadful and God-estranging sins, which leads on whole Legions against the Almighty; This is that bold daring sin which gives Truth it self the lye, and saith, That the Word of God is false, his Promises airy, his Threatnings but a Wind: But know this, O sinner, such a wind they be, that will rise to a dreadful storm, and turn your strong confidence up by the roots, and blow them into Hell, if you make no more of them than you do.

6. If you would be acquainted with God, beware of sensuality. To be sensual and deviliſh are near akin. To be lovers of pleasures, and haters of God, are usually concomitants; in a word, to fare deliciously every day, and to be despised of God, are no strange things. But I wave the further prosecution of these things, because they are so largely and excellently handled already by so many of our brave Worthies, See Mr. *Baxters Saints Rest*, and *R. A.* his *Vindiciæ Pietatis*.

XII. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, resolvedly and freely give up your self to him, and enter into a most solemn Covenant with him. And here I shall make bold with that Reverend Author which *R. A.* doth mention in his *Vindiciæ Pietatis*, and present you again with that excellent Form with the preparatories to it, which I have lately met with in the forementioned Author. After your

your moſt ſerious addreſſes to God, and after a deliberate conſideration of the terms of this Covenant; and after a thorow-ſearch of your own heart, whether you either have already, or can now freely make ſuch a cloſure with God in Chriſt, as you have been exhorted to: And when you have compoſed your ſpirits into the moſt ſerious frame poſſible, ſuitable to a tranſaction of ſo high a nature, Lay hold upon the Covenant, and rely upon his promiſe of giving grace and ſtrength, whereby you may be enabled to perform your promiſe. Reſolve in the next place to be faithful, having engaged your hearts, and opened your mouths, and ſubſcribed with your hands to the Lord; reſolve in his ſtrength never to go back. And being thus prepared, and ſome convenient time being ſet apart for the purpoſe, fall upon the work, and in the moſt ſolemn manner poſſible, as if the Lord were viſibly preſent before your eyes; fall down on your knees, and ſpreading forth your hands towards Heaven, open your hearts to the Lord in theſe or the like words.

O moſt dreadful God, for the Paſſion of thy Son, I beſeech thee accept of thy poor Prodigal, now proſtrating himſelf at thy door; I have fallen from thee by mine Iniquity, and am by Nature a Son of Death, and a thouſand-fold more the Child of Hell by my Wicked Practiſe; but of thine infinite Grace thou haſt promiſed Mercy to me in Chriſt, if I will but turn to thee with all my Heart: Therefore upon the Call of the

Goſpel

Gospel I am now come in, and throwing down my Weapons, submit my self to thy mercy. And because thou requirest as the Condition of my Peace with thee, that I should put away mine idols, and be at defiance with all thine Enemies, which I acknowledge I have wickedly sided with against thee; I here from the bottom of mine Heart renounce them all, freely covenanting with thee, not to allow my self in any known Sin, but conscientiously to use all the means that I know thou hast prescribed for the Death and utter Destruction of all my Corruptions; And whereas I have formerly inordinately and Idolatrously let out my Affections upon the World, I do here resign my heart to thee that madest it. Humbly protesting before thy glorious Majesty, that it is the firm Resolution of my Heart: and that I do unfeignedly desire grace from thee, that when thou shalt call me hereunto, I may practice this my Resolution, through thy Assistance, to forsake all that is dear unto me in this World, rather than to turn from thee to the ways of sin; And that I will watch against all its Temptations, whether of Prosperity or Adversity, lest they should withdraw my Heart from thee; beseeching thee also to help me against the Temptations of Satan, to whose suggestions,

I

I resolve, by thy Grace never to yield my self a Servant. And because mine own Righteousness is but menstruous Rags, I renounce all Confidence therein, and acknowledge that I am of my self a hopeless, helpless undone Creature, without righteousness or strength. And for as much as thou hast of thy bottomless Mercy offered most graciously to me wretched sinner, to be again my God through Christ, if I would accept of thee; I call Heaven and Earth to record this day that I do here solemnly avouch thee for the Lord my God, and with all possible Veneration, bowing the Neck of my Soul under the Feet of thy most Sacred Majesty, I do here take thee the Lord Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for my Portion, and chief good, and do give up my self, Body, and Soul for thy Servant; promising and vowing to serve thee in holiness and righteousness all the dayes of my life.

And since thou hast appointed the Lord Jesus Christ, the only means of coming unto thee, I do here upon the bended Knees of my Soul, accept of him as the only new and living way, by which sinners may have access to thee; and do here solemnly, joyn my self in a Marriage-Covenant to him.

O blessed Jesus, I come to thee hungry and

hardly

hardly bestead, poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked, a most loathsome polluted wretch, a guilty condemned Malefactor, unworthy for ever to wash the feet of the Servants of my Lord, much more to be Solemnly Married to the King of Glory; But since such is thine unparallel'd Love, I do here with all my power accept thee for my Head and Husband, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, for all times and conditions, to Love and Honour, and obey thee before all others, and this to the Death. I embrace thee in all thy Offices, I renounce mine own worthiness, and do here avow thee to be the Lord my righteousness; I renounce mine own Wisdom, and do here take thee for mine only Guide; I renounce mine own will, and take thy will for my Law.

And since thou hast told me that I must suffer if I will reign, I do here covenant with thee, to take my Lot as it falls with thee, and by thy Grace assisting, to run all hazards with thee, verily supposing, that neither life nor death shall part between thee and me.

And because thou hast been pleased to give me thy Holy Law, as the rule of my life, and the way in which I should walk to thy Kingdom; I do here willingly put my Neck under thy Yoke, and set my shoulders to thy Burden,

and

and subscribing to all thy Laws, as Holy, Just, and Good; I Solemnly take them as the rule of my Words, Thoughts, and Actions: Promising, that though my flesh contradict and rebel, yet I will endeavour to order and govern my whole life according to thy direction, and will not allow my self in the neglect of any thing that I know to be my duty.

Only because through the frailty of my flesh, I am subject to many failings; I am bold humbly to protest, that unhallowed miscarriages contrary to the setled bent and resolution of my heart, shall not make void this Covenant; for so thou hast said.

Now Almighty God, searcher of hearts, thou knowest that I make this Covenant with thee this day, without any known guile, or Reservation, beseeching thee, that if thou espiest any flaw or falshood herein, thou wouldest discover it to me, and help me to do it aright.

And now glory be to thee, O God the Father, whom I shall be bold from this day forward, to look upon thee, as my God and Father, That ever thou shouldest find out such a way for the recovery of undone sinners. Glory be to thee, O God the Son, who hast loved me, and washed me from my sins in thine own Blood, and art now become my

Saviour and Redeemer. Glory be to thee, O God the Holy Ghoſt, who by the finger of thine Almighty power haſt turned about my Heart from ſin to God.

O dreadful Jehovah, *the Lord God Omnipotent, Father, Son, and Holy, Ghoſt, thou art now become my Covenant-Friend, and I through thine infinite Grace, am become thy Covenant-Servant.* Amen. So be it. *And the Covenant which I have made on Earth, let it be ratified in Heaven.*

The Concluſion.

AND novv my VVork is done, I muſt leave you; and whether I ſhall ever ſpeak to you, or ſee you, or write to you again while the world ſtands, I know not: My body is frail, and I am a poor dying man, and before it be long, my mouth will be more ſtopped than it is, and yours too: And therefore it's high time for us to look about us. As for my part, I have vvith all the ſeriouſneſs that I could for my ſoul, ſpoke to you, about the great and vveighty affairs of your Souls and Eternity. I again call Heaven and Earth to witneſs, that I have ſet Life and Death before you; I have in the Name of my great Maſter been wooing of you to accept of his Son, for your Lord and Husband; himſelf for your *God*, Father and Friend. I have told you what the Lord doth require of them that would be in Covenant with him. I have given you a rude Deſcription of him vvhom I would have you acquainted vvith

with, I have told you of ſome of the Glorious Effects of Acquaintance with God. I have told you of the danger of being a ſtranger to God. I have told you how thankfully ſome have cloſed with theſe Offers, and how well they like their Choice. I have further ſhow'd you what a peaceable State you ſhall be in, immediately upon your Spiritual Alliance with this Great and Noble Friend. I have told you alſo of ſome further benefit and good that will come unto you upon your acquaintance with God. I have given you to underſtand how deſirous the Lord is notwithſtanding all that is paſt, to forget and forgive, and to receive you into Favour, if you will in good earneſt return to him with ſpeed. I have again and again propounded this Match to you, and told you as much as I could well do in ſo ſhort a time; I have ſtayed a great while for an Anſwer, I have put the buſineſs forward all that poſſibly I could; becauſe I ſee how fooliſhly and madly you make light of thoſe advantageous Offers, that are made to you; I have again and again pleaded with you, as if I were ready to ſtarve, and begging an Alms of you; Nay, if it had been for my very Life, I could not have ſpoke with more earneſtneſs. I have Expoſtulated the Caſe with you, and asked you ſeveral Weighty Queſtions, and you have not, you cannot anſwer any one of them, but you muſt condemn your ſelf, and by your own Confeſſion, you have nothing in the world to ſay againſt the Excellency of this Friend. And therefore you muſt either ſpeedily come in, upon the invitation, and cloſe with theſe gracious Overtures that are made to you, or you muſt without any reaſon in the world (your ſelf being

Judg) cast your self away. And in hopes that all that have heard me, will not be so mad as to make light of these things, but be asking with some seriousness, that great Question? How shall I do to get Acquainted with God? How shall I do to get a Friend for my Soul? VVhat shall I do to be Saved? I have laid down some Directions for those that are unfeignedly desirous to be reconciled to God; I have told them that they must labour to be thorowly Acquainted with that Strangeness and Enmity that is in their Hearts against God; and of the unspeakable Danger of their being Strangers to God. I have further directed them that would be Acquainted with God to Labour to get humble Hearts. I have advised that they visit him often, if they would be intimately Acquainted with him; and that not in a transitory way, but to make a Solemn set Visit of it, and to be sure that they do not forget to get Christ along with them. I Counselled them also to be much in those Places where he is wont to walk; and to get Intimately acquainted with some of them that know Him very vvell, and vvill do their best to get them to be acquainted with Him. I have told you; that if you would be acquainted with God, you must kindly entertain, and make much of any Messengers that come from him to you; and if men would make sure work, I desired them as they loved their Souls, that they vvould follow this great Business with the greatest earnestness and seriousness in the vvorld; and that, vvhat they do, they vvould do speedily. I informed you what arguments the Scripture puts into our Mouths, vvhich vve may urge, at the Throne of Grace. I intreated you, for your Souls

sake

like to take heed of those things which kept God and Man unacquainted; as Namely, all sin in general, but more particularly, Pride, Worldly mindedness; Hypocrisie, Delight in Wicked Company, Unbelief and Sensuality. Lastly, I direct all such as would be at peace with God, to give up themselves to him resolvedly and freely, in a Solemn Covenant.

And have I been beating the Air all this while? What will yo do after all this? What shall become of all these Sermons? Dare any of you all still be contented to be Unacquainted with God? Can you be very well satisfied, after you have heard of such a Friend, to be a stranger to him? Can any of you look upon your State as safe, while God is your Enemy? O how shall I leave you, with Hearts full of Enmity against your Maker! Alas, alas, poor Hearts! You look very merrily as bad a Condition as you are in, but did you but know how neer you are to Everlasting Burnings, I believe it would put a damp upon your Spirits, and spoil your Mirth. O how shall I leave that poor sinner, that stands as a person altogether unconcerned! Whereas Death stands ready for his Commission, to fetch him away before God; and where are you then? O where are you then, if you come before God as a Stranger? O what shall I do for thee? What shall I say to thee, to prevail with thee! O what Arguments will perswade thee! O, how shall we part! Brethren, my hearts desire is that you may all be saved. O that you may all know in this your day, the things of your Peace! O that I could mingle all my words with Tears! O pity, pity, for the Lords sake, pity your precious

Souls! O come not here to ask Counsel of God, and then go away, and take the Counsel of the Devil, And what will you yet make light of all the Tenders of the Gospel? *Is* Peace, Pardon, Reconciliation, and Acquaintance with God, still nothing with you? Will you for all this take up with a Lifeless Religion, and never mind a more Spiritual intimate Converse with God? As the Lord liveth, thou speakest that word against the Life of thy Soul. But if thou wilt go on, and despise God, who can help it? I have told you, and told you again, what the end of these things will be. Well once more, I ask thee in the Name of God, wilt thou have God for thy Friend or no? That is, wilt thou love him above all the World? Wilt thou accept him for thy Lord and Husband? Wilt thou be ruled absolutely by him? Wilt thou lay down thy Weapons, and turn on Gods side, and fight under his Banner? Wilt thou have Holiness here, and Happiness hereafter? One would think this is a Question, that one need not be long a resolving. Come, come away for the Lords sake; for your precious Souls sake, as you would be owned at the Day of Judgment; as you would Rejoyce when most of the World shall be filled with unspeakable Horrour, and perplexity; as you would not hear that heart-rending word from the mouth of the Judge, *Depart, I know you not*, come away, I beseech you! Come away! O ye my dear Friends, the Cloud hangs over the World, and ere long it will fall with a Vengeance. O come out of *Sodom*, linger not for the Lords sake, lest the dint of that Storm fall upon you. Fire! fire! fire! Awake! awake! awake!

awake! The Fire is kindled. What meaneſt thou, O ſinner! If thou ſleepeſt a little longer in that Bed of Security, thou art a dead man, thou wilt be awakned with Horror, when thou ſhalt know thy Danger, but not know how to avoid it: And do you ſtill ſay? Make haſt? O make haſt, your Glaſs is almoſt out, your time almoſt ſpent, and Death is haſtning apace upon you; I ſpeak it again, make haſte, come away, I can't, I can't hold my Peace. How can I endure to ſee the Ruine of thy Soul, and ſay nothing! O follow thoſe Directions which I have given thee out of the Scripture! Seek the Lord while he may be found, and with all poſſible ſpeed, ſeriouſneſs, and gratitude, accept of his Kindneſs, while you may. Methinks ſome of your hearts ſeem to be affected; methinks your Countenances ſpeak you to have ſome thoughts of returning; ſome of you look like perſons almoſt reſolved to ſet upon this great work, O that it may not be almoſt, but altogether! Speak in ſuch Language as this to your own Souls. What meaneſt thou, O my Soul, thus to ſtand Diſputing? Is this a time for thee to ſtand ſtill, as if thou hadſt nothing to do? Hark how the King of Glory Calls! Hark how his Meſſengers invite you! Conſider how long they have ſtood waiting for thee! And ſhall they go away without thee? O fooliſh Heart and Unwiſe; wilt thou anſwer all theſe Gracious Offers with a flat denial? Or that which is little better, wilt thou put off all Gods Meſſengers with ſome ſorry Excuſes? Awake, O my Soul, and look about thee! How can'ſt thou refuſe when Mercy calls? How

canst thou deny when Kindness it self asks, intreats, beseecheth thee? Awake for shame, up and put on thy Wedding Garments! O that this mind might be in you always! O that thou wert up and ready! And then happy were the day wherein thou wert Born; then happy were the day that ever you heard of a Christ, of Acquaintance with God, and Reconciliation with your Maker. O then how glorious shouldest thou be for ever! I Rejoyce to see the Day of thy Marriage a comming; when thy Lord and Husband shall bring thee home in the greatest State, and in infinite Glory to his own House, where thou shalt sit like a Queen for ever and ever. Behold his Harbingers are coming! Behold how many Messengers the Lord hath sent to prepare his way! Awake, O *Zion*, and put on thy Beautiful Garments! Rise up, O Royal Bride, and put on thy Princely Robes! Cloath thee with the Sun, and put the Moon under thy Feet. Go out and meet the King thy Husband. Behold, O *Jacob*, the Waggons of *Joseph* are coming! Behold, O daughter of *Zion*, the Chariots, the Chariots of thy King and Husband are a coming! They are a coming! O why doth not thy Heart leap within thee! O why do not thy Spirits even faint for gladness! Why dost thou not say, It is enough, I will go out and meet my Lord before I die? When will the Sun be up! When will the day break! When, O when will the Shadows fly away! I will get me up to the Mountains of Myrrhe, to the Hills of Frankincense. I am travelling for *Zion*, my Face is towards *Jerusalem*; who will ascend the Holy Hill with me? Who

will

vvill bear me Company to my Husband's Houſe? Let us go up to the Lords Houſe; Come away, the Sun is riſen, the ſhadows are flying away, thouſands are gone already. Let *Barzillai* and *Chimham*, Old and Young too, go along vvith the King to *Jeruſalem*. Come from the High-vvays and Hedges, come with your VVedding-Garments, come quickly and he vvill make you Welcome. The King hath ſent to invite us to a Feaſt, a Feaſt of fat things, of Wines on the Lees vvell Refined. Come, for the Table is ſpread, all things are ready, and his Servants ſtay for us. And will God entertain ſuch Creatures as we are? And vvill the Lord open his Doors to ſuch loath-ſome Beggars? Will the Father receive ſuch Prodigals! Return then unto thy Reſt, O my Soul, for the Lord will deal Bountifully vvith thee. Who is that vvhich I ſee coming in the Field? Who is this that comes from the Wilderneſs? That comes to meet us? Hark! methinks I hear the Trumpet ſounding: Hark! Whats the matter! How do the Mountains Ecco! How doth the Air Ring again! What Noiſe is that which I hear! What Glorious Train is that which I ſee! Whence do they come, and whether do they go? It is my Maſter's Son (dear Soul) thy Lord and Husband with his Royal Attendants. Behold he comes! He comes apace! Leaping upon the Hills, Skipping upon the Mountains. He is coming! He is coming! He is even at the Door! Ere long thou ſhalt ſee the Mountains covered with Chariots and Horſes of Fire; the Earth will tremble and ſhake; the Heavens and the Earth will be all on a Flaming Fire; the King of

Glory

[illegible] upon the Wings of the Wind, accompanied with Millions of his Saints and Angels; He is coming, he is at the door. Go, Veil thy Face, alight and meet thy Husband. He will bring thee into his Fathers Palace, and thou shalt be his Wife, and he will love thee for Ever: And thou shalt remember thy Widowhood no more. *Even so, Come Lord Jesus, Come quickly.* Amen, Amen.

Amen

FINIS.